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Twin Cities Campus



H I S T O R Y
OF THE
BRITISH CONQUESTS
IN
I N D I A .

BY
HORACE ST. JOHN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

LONDON:
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TO JAMES AUGUSTUS ST. JOHN.

MY DEAR FATHER,

I dedicate to you this book, the result of my numerous inquiries into the Political History of British India. You will receive it, I hope, with pleasure, as I am sure it is offered with gratitude to you for the patient care which you have always displayed in assisting my researches. The subject is, I think, as interesting to you as to me, and I trust my discussion of it may be considered to have effected some useful purpose; but whatever the work may be, and whatever its reception by the world, this at least is a tribute of gratitude to you, as sincere and as deep as could be inspired by the piety and affection of your son,

HORACE ROSCOE ST. JOHN.

May, 1852.

P R E F A C E.

I DESIRE here simply to state the pretensions of this book, and to notice the authorities on which it has been based. It is an endeavour concisely to explain the causes which led to the establishment and extension of our Asiatic Empire—the political reason of the wars which, in succession, changed the English from humble traders to imperial governors in the East.

No writer should produce a work which he thinks has no merit. Therefore, I do not wish, with a parade of ostentatious humility, to repudiate all claim to praise on account of these volumes. They have been written with care, after researches studiously pursued, I hope with judgment—I am sure with honesty. Use-

ful, accordingly, I think they will be; but they do not pretend to any superior value. Accuracy has been my aim.

The bias of the work is obvious from the beginning, but it is not, I think, partial or prejudiced. Long before I commenced it, I had endeavoured to form, from diligent inquiry, an independent opinion on the history and administration of the East India Company. The idea of writing a political history of that great society did not occur to me, until my views were entirely settled; so that the book, though confessedly a vindication, will not, I hope, be considered the apology of an advocate.

In the choice of authorities I have been guided by a desire to balance the statements and opinions of writers hostile and friendly to the East India Company, as well as of those whose minds preside with judicial impartiality over the historical account of our conquests in Asia. The able and elaborate work of Mr. Mill, read by the light of Professor Horace Hayman Wilson's learned and valuable commentary, with the commentator's own continuation; the brilliant and oratorical history of Mr. Edward Thornton, and the lively, honest narrative of M. Barchou de Pen-

hoen, have formed the leading chains to conduct from one end to the other of this diversified inquiry. The French writer, however, trusted almost entirely to Mr. Mill, without the aid of his eloquent editor's notes and elucidations. The well-written, but unpopular work of Mr. Orme; the standard old chronicles of travel and trade; the Annals of Bruce; the able volumes of Mr. Peter Auber; the neat sketch of Xavier Raymond and Dubois de Jancigny; the useful Summary of Captain Thornton; Stewart's History of Bengal; Duff's History of the Mahrattas; Sir John Malcolm's admirable work on Central India, and his Political History, with Hamilton's magnificent description of Hindustan, and Mr. Edward Thornton's other rich and various contributions to our knowledge of India, have all proved of great service to me.

The recent work of Mr. Kaye on the war in Afghanistan I have examined with peculiar interest, though I do not agree with many of its opinions, while I beg to notice the admirable and concise sketch of Mr. Mackenna, as extremely well suited for popular circulation.

Where, however, so many books are necessary to the completion, in any fair manner of a work like this, it is impossible to speak of them all,

though it may be invidious to notice only a few. Each, however, is referred to in its proper place, and I have only to hope that the volumes I now dismiss may be accepted as a useful contribution to the History of British Conquests in India.

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BRITISH CONQUESTS IN INDIA.

“The Commission of the Company began in Commerce, and ended in Empire.”—BURKE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENGLISH IN INDIA.

FEW events in history are more remarkable than those which led to the establishment of British power in India. At the commencement of the seventeenth century, a few adventurers humbly solicited permission to trade at a port on the shores of Hindustan. Small companies of them resided by sufferance in four little cities, under the dominion of a monarch whose empire was more splendid and more extensive than

any other at that period on the face of the earth. They were tolerated by the grace of this barbarian potentate ; they won his favour; they acquired influence ; they became masters of a town, and then of the contiguous territory ; their factories were exchanged for forts, and now their authority is recognised over the length and breadth of India. A senate, assembled on the banks of the Thames, makes laws for the dwellers on the banks of the Indus and the Ganges. From a council-hall in the heart of London proceed decrees which regulate the destinies of a region still adorned by the stately relics of Ghaznevide, of Gaurian, and of Afghan dynasties, and marked by the traces of Greek, of Arabian, and of Tartar invasions. Great Britain is now possessed, in the East, of an empire no less magnificent than that of Alexander.¹ She has indeed accomplished, in the course of ages, what the son of Philip achieved in a short life; but his immense dominion was parted in fragments over his grave, while hers has grown in strength as well as in extent. Her power has spread so far, that some, before it reached its actual development, declared its further progress

¹ Macaulay : History of England, i., 2.

could only be a misfortune, as a cause of premature decay.¹

If there be any just excuse for the vanity of power, Englishmen possess it in the contemplation of the superb and gigantic fabric erected by their countrymen in the richest region of the East. Pride never enjoyed a more legitimate occasion. Still there are some whose views assume a different colour; who blush over our success; who point to India as a monument of our profligate lust of empire, perceiving, in the history of our progress there, no more than a series of iniquitous aggressions on the natural liberties of mankind. It is singular to find among these the historian who undertakes an apology for the Dutch atrocities in Amboyna, and a defence of the nefarious cruelty practised against the English in the Black Hole of Calcutta.² Others have, with laborious malevolence, sought to associate every hateful principle of government with our system of rule.³ And one, admitting the beneficent nature of our sway, has compared the series of campaigns which established it, to the cruel devastations of Hyder and

¹ Heeren : Historical Researches, European States, ii., 392.

² Mill : History of British India, iii., 161.

³ British Friend of India Magazine.

Tippoo.¹ The speculators of this class believe, and are at pains to prove, that our dominion is an usurpation ; that it was established by injustice, and has flourished in the oppression of the native races. It is my object to show that—some episodes excepted—the history of British conquests in India is a narrative honourable to our name ; that our territories have been rightfully acquired, and that the wars we entered upon were justified by the accepted law of nations, as well as by the canons of morality. The other topics do not fall within the range of this inquiry. I shall endeavour to justify the conquest—others have vindicated the government—of India. In both there are points which the candour of history will compel all judges to condemn. Instances there may have been where an intemperate policy, or the prospect of political gain, may have broken a peace, or prolonged a war; but I believe it may be honestly asserted, that no territories were ever more fairly conquered, or more wisely administered. The explanation of our conduct, indeed, contains its own defence ; but it may be useful to select, concentrate, and compress the evidence. To this I

¹ Campbell : British India.

confine my attempt. Nevertheless, a preliminary expression of opinion may be allowed on the character of that administration which has succeeded the tyranny of Mogul, of Nawab, and of Subahdar.

There have been, and there are, those who represent our government of India as an invariable oppression, which has overthrown the ancient systems without replacing them by any institutions to recompense the native race for the independence it has lost. Singular grounds for these accusations are chosen. The mouldering trophies of the Imperial age are pointed to as signs of an unhappy change. But they are evidences of a fortunate revolution. Old palaces are in ruins; but cottages multiply and are inhabited in peace: royal gardens, beautiful as paradise, lie in neglect; but the plains are covered with harvests which are safely gathered in. Formerly a few splendid cities attested the wealth of monarchy; now the face of a regenerated country displays the prosperity of nations. The ancient princes of the land lavished on a pavilion or a tomb the riches of a province; but myriads lived houseless, that the royal dead might have gorgeous habitations. Under the past system, India decayed, while her oppressors flourished;

under the new, India has bloomed and endowed its rulers with the thank-offerings of its increase. It is true that policy and justice may require many reforms in the fiscal administration, but it is equally untrue that any deliberate tyranny is practised. However, these accusers have been ably answered.¹ There may be a collision of opinions respecting the grounds of acquisition: there can be none as to the blessings India has derived from the change of rule. The contrast of its former with its present condition is as great as that between the England of the middle ages and the England of this day.² It is not true that our authority rests on the point of the bayonet. It is rooted in the hearts of the people. It is defended by native swords, which cheerfully aid us in preserving peace in the centre, and safety on the frontier, of our empire. A desire for profit, which it is easy to term a lust of gain, of course led the English to the East; this no one will deny. But the confession is no less just, that the dominion acquired by arms has been secured by law.³ If the barbarians have remained barbarous (which cannot truly be affirmed)

¹ Bengal Field Officer: *Asiatic Journal*.

² Mackinnon: *History of Civilization*, ii., 206.

³ Heeren: *European States and Colonies*, ii., 128.

the Europeans have retained their civilization, and will communicate it to the races they govern. The process has already commenced. Peace, security, and social order, which they never before enjoyed, have been bestowed on the people of Hindustan. Equal advantages have been gained by the poor, who had no hope in their poverty, and the rich, who had no pleasure in their wealth.¹ They have a free press; they are receiving education; their industry has improved; famines, which were once the scourge and curse of the land, generating the crime of infanticide,² now never occur; child-murder, with the immolation of women, has been suppressed; their trade is more flourishing; their condition in every respect is better; their manners are being purified; and many features of their ancient barbarism are rapidly wearing away. This has been accomplished by the government of the East India Company, described by a Frenchman as one of the most glorious works of civilization.³ The origin and plan of that government were singular, but its fruits have been remarkable also; and it is not easy to

¹ Mackinnon: History of Civilization, ii., 206.

² Papers presented to Parliament, 1843.

³ Fontaine: Voyage dans l'Inde, ii., 100.

imagine a form of administration which could wisely replace it. Any sudden or violent change, indeed, would be dangerous to the prosperity of India.¹ Inquiries into the conduct of affairs may, nevertheless, be desirable; but the statesman's remark was only strictly just—That any investigation into the general policy of the East India Company must result in additional honour to that association.² I apply this remark to the conquest, as well as to the administration of India.

Nor is it necessary, while seeking grounds in justification of that conquest, to retreat among the arguments of the bolder theorists, on the laws of nature and of nations. That the denial of trade is full cause of war against a barbarous people was laid down by able writers of the sixteenth century,³ who would have blown open with petards the inhospitable gates of Japan. The privilege of conquering all Pagans was asserted by popes and assumed by kings.⁴ This doctrine, however, which was borrowed from

¹ Briggs' Preface to *Ferishta*, i., 18. A monument of learning.

² Sir Robert Peel's Speech on East India Charter, Feb. 9, 1830.

³ Francisco a Victorio : *Relectiones Theologicae—Dominic Soto, De Justitiâ et Jure.*

⁴ Polson : *History of the Laws of Nations.*

Rome by the Mohammedans, was denied by philosophers, who upheld sterner principles than the *illuminati* of this day would adopt. They declared the universal operation of that international law which allows to every nation the right of independence, though they argued that the refusal of commercial intercourse was itself an infraction of that liberal compact.¹ The temper of the present age revolts against many similar views entertained by the chief expounders of that natural convention which binds all the races of humanity, and must be obeyed by every people aspiring to the dignity of civilization. Maxims irrevocably fixed by ethical writers of various countries have been abandoned, more by sentiment than reason. It is doubtful whether the interest of mankind would not be better secured by the application of those principles than by the acceptance of the new code. Nevertheless, it is not in this theory that we are compelled to seek for justification of British conquests in the East.

¹ Mackintosh: Ethical Philosophy, 109.

CHAPTER II.

THE INVADERS OF INDIA.

OUR countrymen proceeded to India in the simple character of merchants. Circumstances forced them to become conquerors. The original charter of their association recognised no idea of political empire,¹ which arose out of combinations altogether unforeseen. It has been deprecated by the representatives of British power in the country, forbidden by peremptory decrees of the Imperial Legislature, opposed by the supreme authorities in the Company, and, since 1784 especially, incredible pains have been taken to confine its limits.² Their policy has been throughout

¹ General Briggs' Preface to *Ferishta*, i., 18.

² Walter Hamilton: *Hindustan*, i., 34.

opposed to territorial acquisition. In numerous instances, indeed, they have slighted the claims of humanity in listening to the judgments of a new international law, and fought against what we may believe their destiny, in order to win the praise of moderation. When a man with aspirations of conquest rose to power, he alarmed the Government, which replaced him by a successor of humbler views, who sometimes, by an idolatry of peace, accumulated the causes of future war. Had they obeyed their scruples less, and indulged their ambition more, years of misery might have been spared to the inhabitants of many Indian states. Indeed, their good-will to the native powers, the services they rendered to them, and the charges they have borne in their behalf, have frequently aided in the ultimate extension of their empire. This is shown, not only by British historians—who may be supposed pleading their own cause—but it is also acknowledged by writers who might have been expected to deal bitterly with the acts of a nation which expelled their own from the richest parts of Asia.¹

In a word, strangers were compelled to con-

¹ Barchou de Penhoen : Empire Anglais, i., 10.

quer in self-defence. Many circumstances combined to drive them into the alternative of abandoning all intercourse with India, of leaving it in the possession of its earlier invaders, to be disputed by other European powers, or of acquiring, whether by the sword or by diplomacy, one after another, every country between the Indus and the Brahmaputra, from the sultry wilderness of Sindh to the rich valley of Assam. Chance, which the subtlest policy cannot deprive of its share in governing the fortunes of the world, neighbourhood, the relations of trade, personal interests, and friendly alliances, brought the English into contact with the potentates of Hindustan. They were compelled to take part in the political transactions of the country.¹ Their intercourse became complicated by accidents which no caution could prevent, because no convention will bind the faith of an Asiatic prince. The process continued until one course only remained. The entangled interests were divided by the sword. War sprang up. Peace never afterwards went beyond an armed truce, and gradually this alternative alone remained—to subjugate the enemy or be destroyed by him.

¹ Charles Hamilton : History of the Rohillas, 157.

Such was the general history of English conquests when our Indian Empire was in its youth. Afterwards it became the duty of the conquerors to provide for the safety of the populations which had fallen under their sway, and the allies whom they had engaged to defend. To protect them from the inroads and encroachment of the independent kings, treaties were made, but continually broken by the Oriental powers, until, forced from alliance to war, from war to conquest after conquest, the merchants built up their empire to its present gigantic proportions. We became imperial in the East entirely without design, and much against our inclination. The subjugation of state after state has been accomplished by the united wisdom and valour of some among the most admirable ministers to the glory and greatness of the British nation. Statesmen and soldiers of the first rank have there accomplished together achievements whose brilliance is unsurpassed. Many of the noblest episodes of our military history are associated with India: we have subdued its people by our civilization, as we overthrew its despots by our arms; yet none of these triumphs would vindicate our position there, were there not absolute justification of the conquests which these exploits served to complete.

From a general view of the nature of those causes which led to the establishment and extension of our empire, I will proceed to the particular circumstances which appear to place the East India Company, from the date of its first charter to this hour, beyond the charge of unprincipled aggressions on the independence of the native races.

On the threshold of this inquiry, there is one consideration very important to remember. Whether we agree with one theory, that the Hindus are the aboriginal inhabitants of British India;¹ or with another, that the original stock is now represented by scattered tribes of Pagan savages still holding to the woods and hills;² or that its plains were colonized by emigrants with the imperial blood of the pure Caucasian race;³ it is certain that, as far as history extends, they have never been able to preserve their independence. Under the direction and discipline of their conquerors, they have filled the ranks of magnificent armies; but the courageous and resolute invaders of India have always been victorious. What, indeed, were the conditions

¹ Mill : History of British India, i., 153.

² Wilson : Note to Mill, i., 153.

³ Cunningham : History of the Sikhs, 21.

under which the ancient tenants of the soil enjoyed its wealth, even tradition fails to tell. Beyond the luminous space in history which is filled by the fortunes of Greece and Rome, we discern the populous plains of the East enriched by industry and beautified by art. Egypt was not yet graced by those marvellous fabrics whose stately ruins still attract pilgrims from all the civilized world; the rock of Acropolis stood in a wilderness, and the Peninsula of Italy was inhabited by savages, when architecture adorned the borders of the Ganges, where many luxurious cities flourished.¹ Such, at least, is the picture revealed to us by the earliest glimmerings of light shed on the East, which, in the moral as in the physical system, is the region of the dawn.

Since that period India has been the prey of successive invaders. Not to insist on the fabled triumphs of the Pharaohs, we know that the Kings of Persia pushed their conquests into that region. Alexander passed its borders, and marched far on his way towards the sacred river. When on a rich plain beyond the Hyphasis, he found himself in the heart of a populous and wealthy continent, it was the discontent of his camp, not the valour

¹ Thornton: History of India, i.

of his enemy, which cut short his victorious career.¹ His successors ruled fragments of the empire he bequeathed. Syrians and Bactrians shared the subjugated provinces; the polished arms of Greece gave way before the storms of Tartar cavalry; and, at the time of the first European visits, Mohammedan conquerors were lords of the ascendant in Hindustan. Their religious mission, however, though the pretext of their enterprise, had failed to accomplish its full purpose. A Muslim government, with a Muslim army, ruled over a Hindu population.² The soil had been usurped by a strange race. The Crescent in India was as foreign as the Cross. Our countrymen, therefore, in overthrowing the ruling powers, did not ravish the original independence of those countries. One conqueror only succeeded to another, and no contrast is possible between the fruits of British, and the fruits of Muslim, rule. The fortunes of the Ghaznevide, the Gaurian, or the Afghan dynasties need, however, no description here. It may, as we proceed, be necessary to recal a few circumstances connected with their annals; but at present the introduction of our countrymen to India has a natural claim to notice.

¹ Mitford: History of Greece, x., 198.

² Mill: History of British India, ii., 234.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY ENTERPRISES OF THE ENGLISH.

THE enterprise of Europe, excited by the Portuguese discoveries, was directed almost exclusively to the East. In England a strong desire sprang up to share a commerce which had filled the argosies and treasuries of Venice. The accounts of early adventures form a narrative familiar to every reader. On the last day of the year 1600, the Governor and Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies, received their charter, solely as a trading association.¹ The powers granted them were purely commercial. Dealing with armed races, however, they were necessarily allowed to introduce into their merchant ships

¹ Bruce : Annals of E.I.C., i., 136.

the discipline of war, though only as a means of safety. It was the universal custom of the time. The privileges of civil and mercantile jurisdiction, the right of opening hostilities, and making peace, with the authority of conquest, were conceded afterwards, at intervals of time. Their history is in this peculiar. In the general order of things, a political body acting as a commonwealth is first established, and creates a commerce by its industrious vigour and adventurous enterprise.¹ In India, however, the reverse occurred. The trade preceded the power, and merchants were the founders of an empire.

The early voyages of the English were directed to the Indian Archipelago. The spices, gems, gums, gold, and other commodities, rare and precious, produced in those stately islands, then formed the chief, if not the only, objects of commercial adventure. It was discovered afterwards that the cotton manufactures of the Continent were prized among the populations of Insular Asia, and the establishment of intercourse with Surat and Cambaya was recommended to the Company.² The enterprise was one of difficulty. There were not only the prejudices of perverse

¹ Burke : Speech against Warren Hastings, Works, xiii., 28.

² Mill : British India, i., 29.

barbarians to overcome; there was the jealousy of the Portuguese, who claimed a right to sweep from the waters of the East the flags of all other nations.¹ The spurious authority of Rome was accepted by the Catholic powers, who were easily persuaded of their own privilege to divide the empire of the globe. Others, however, sought a share in the fruits of discovery. Dawn had broken over Europe, and had begun to disperse the intellectual mists which brooded upon its face. There were countries which did not fear to send their mariners to visit the oceans and shores of a new world, though they should be followed thither by the curse of an Italian priest, or the fire of Catholic navies. England and Holland with arms,² and Grotius with the weapons of reason and rhetoric, asserted the freedom of the sea,³ which they declared was open to the adventurers of all Christendom. This should not be forgotten in a consideration of the earliest intercourse between our countrymen and the potentates of the East, whose empires have collapsed, to form with their ruins a dominion greater and more durable than them all.

¹ Thornton : India : Its State and Prospects, 6.

² Heeren : European States and Colonies, i., 140.

³ Grotius : Mare Liberum, J. Lugt. Bat., 1618.

In 1607, Hawkins visited Surat, near the western base of the peninsula, and was accorded the privilege of trading with his own ship only. The Portuguese received him with insults, as an interloper in their commercial field; but he proceeded to Agra, then the residence of the Mogul, who was the most powerful prince in Hindustan. Jehanghire welcomed him, and gave him permission to open a traffic.¹ Seven years afterwards, Sir Thomas Roe arrived on a mission at the Mogul Court, where he concluded an agreement for liberty of trade in all ports of the empire, especially Surat, Bengal, and Surdy.² Factories were established at Masulipatam and Pullicat. The English were driven from the former by the opposition of the inhabitants, from the latter by the intrigues of the Dutch; but at Arangaum they purchased ground whereon they erected and fortified a magazine. This little acquisition—the first seminal principle of their empire—was, be it remembered, an act of trade: the territory was purchased.³ In 1639, a voluntary grant was made of Madras, with a tract of land, five miles along shore and

¹ Bruce: *Annals of E.I.C.*

² Roe: *Letters and Journals*—Churchill, i., 632.

³ Mill: *British India*, i., 60.

one from the beach, with leave to build a fort.¹ Whatever hostilities took place were between the rival European merchants, whose squadrons were continually engaged, with variable success, to verify the proverb, "No peace beyond the line!"

When, on the death of Jehanghire, the sumptuous Shah Jehan succeeded to the throne after a short domestic war, the Company's influence was slowly but regularly progressing. It settled a new factory at Masulipatam by permission from the tributary King of Golconda, and another at Orissa, by favour of the Great Mogul. Its intercourse with Bengal did not really commence until 1642, when a factory was planted at Balasore, though not publicly countenanced until ten years later. These were all merely commercial proceedings, for the dawn of empire was yet far distant. The cession of Bombay was another acquisition without conquest. It was in 1661 ceded to the English Government by the Portuguese as part of the Infanta Catherine's dowry. They had held it since 1630; but it was not a valuable possession, nor did the Ministers render it such; for in 1668, to be relieved of the charge, they transferred it to the East India Company.²

¹ W. Hamilton : Hindustan, ii., 416.

² Thornton : History of India.

During the greater part of the seventeenth century, peaceful relations continued to exist between the East India Company and the government of the Great Mogul. The power of that monarch, reported to be enormous, was already on the decline. It was often unequal to the complete coercion of the tributary sovereigns, of whom some opposed, while others favoured, the interests of the strangers. Small settlements were made at different points as entrepôts of trade. Tegnapatam, a town and harbour to the south of Pondicherry, on the Coromandel coast, was purchased in 1691, and named Fort St. David.¹ In 1700, the Governor of Bengal allowed the Company to buy three towns, with the land adjacent to their fortified factory—Chuttanutee, Govindpur, and Calcutta, where Fort William was built, and which is now among the imperial cities of British India. In 1707, a treaty was concluded with the Imperial Court, which granted great privileges, and engaged to an honourable alliance with the Company. The zemindary, or revenue administration of thirty-three villages near Calcutta, was allowed to be purchased;² and the factors possessed the right

¹ W. Hamilton : Hindustan, ii., 443.

² Penhoen : Empire Anglais, i., 76.

of property in that part of the East. The Hindu population of the district thus became English subjects, entitled to the protection of English arms and English law. Aggressions upon them, consequently, were as much declarations of war as any invasion of Great Britain could be. Hitherto, however, all transactions had worn the nature of an intercourse between a weaker and a stronger power. The English solicited—the Mogul granted favours.

The caprice of all rulers is proverbial among men; but that of Asiatic princes is the extreme of instability. The Governor of Bengal, disinclined to fulfil his engagements, commenced towards the English a plan of conduct which greatly injured their interests. The judge least favourable to the Company terms it aggression.¹ A system of extortion, adopted by Shaistah Khan, the Subahdar of the province, and descending through all his subordinates, made especial victims of the English.² The policy was begun which lost all India to its Mohammedan rulers. Hostilities followed, though of a trifling nature, but sufficient to bring the English establishments to the verge of ruin.

¹ Mill : British India, i., 121.

² Wilson : Note to Mill, *ibid.*

The traders were only saved by their own humiliation from being driven altogether out of the country.¹ The storm was nevertheless of brief duration, and it passed away, leaving few traces behind. At length the divisions in England, which long obstructed the progress of trade in the East, were repaired. One Company was created with an exclusive charter, a form of government was adopted, and three Presidencies were established in India, to administer its commercial affairs. These were Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, absolutely independent each of the other, and responsible only to the supreme association. The dominion of a few villages, with a harbour or two, and a little naked island, was then divided among them—and now a vast empire is subject to their sway; the descendants of superb dynasties are their pensioners of state; the palaces of their royal cities are prisons, and a mighty territory, peopled by millions still unnumbered, in which the ancient capitals of famous monarchs are provincial towns, is guarded by two hundred thousand men, continually under arms, and moved like the pieces on a chess-board by the decrees of a Council in London.

¹ Bruce : *Annals*, i., 558.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST TERRITORIAL ACQUISITIONS.

UP to the time we have reached, the development of English influence in India was effected, not by force of arms, but by the negotiations of traders. In the little interval of war, they had gained nothing, but ran the risk of losing all. Hostilities, indeed, had been frequent, but they were with the Portuguese or Dutch, whose jealousy sought to close every Oriental market against our merchants. Holland was reaping vast profits from her adventures, while England was far less fortunate; but monopoly is never contented, and with a return of from twenty to twenty-five per cent.,¹ the speculators of Amster-

¹ Raynal : Hist. des Etablissements, ii., 21.

dam envied their rivals with seven or eight.¹ The French also had reached India, not with the simple idea of trade, but with the acknowledged ambition of empire.² Yet they long remained strangers to our countrymen, and pursued their designs without coming into collision with any competitor. At length, in 1744, great complications arose in the politics of Europe. The interests of the monarchies clashing, war broke out. A struggle for the Austrian throne threw Germany into convulsions; Spain and England had long been contending over the right of search, and France at last fell within this circle of contention.³ Famine, pestilence, and slaughter, had not wearied those nations of the battle-field. The seas beyond the line became the theatre of innumerable contests, in which the belligerents found themselves under the shadow of a splendid empire, in whose politics each was deeply involved.

At that period, the English possessions at Madras, their principal settlement on the Coromandel coast, consisted of a territory about five miles long and one mile wide, with an ill-fortified

¹ Mill: *Third Report*, iii., 49.

² Penhoen: *Empire Anglais*, i., 13.

³ Heeren: *European States and Colonies*, ii., 6.

town—the whole containing a population of about a quarter of a million of souls. It was weakly protected, badly armed, and insufficiently stored.¹ The French captured it: Labordonnais commenced his enterprise against the English establishments in the East. Dupleix developed the scheme with more ability and less scruple. His ambition was not pointed to commercial eminence. He meditated actual conquest, and his countrymen are proud of the reflection. If we may indulge their vanity, we may believe that the gigantic achievements of Clive and Wellesley were all meditated and planned by the daring genius of this French Darius.² He was undoubtedly a man of soaring views, and possessed many of the qualities essential to their realization. He followed the policy which the Dutch pursued in other parts of Asia, negotiating at the Courts of the native princes, attaching the interests of France with theirs, involving them in engagements, and then designing suddenly to join issue with the sword. A process in some measure analogous was, indeed, developed by the English; but solely as a means of commercial advancement. They shrank from wide territorial

¹ Wilson: Note to Mill, iii., 53.

² Penhoen: Empire Anglais, i., 13.

acquisition. The French panted for it. The English often refused to acknowledge an occasion of conquest; the French always eagerly secured it, and boast of their defeated ambition; while it is matter of history that the East India Company, obeying the orders of the Imperial Legislature, relaxed their hold of subdued provinces again and again, until compelled to consummate the act of annexation. This is proved by the spirit of all their records. If, indeed, humanity may blame their conduct, it is for refusing on many occasions to reap the fruits of conquest, which is often not only a right but a duty.

The events noted down in this concise sketch of English intercourse with India from 1600 to 1749, may be regarded as a preliminary course which leads in the narrative of British conquest. Such an outline was necessary to a clear comprehension of the views which follow.

We now, therefore, find our countrymen in possession of territories in India, acquired, not by the fortune of war, but by the right of purchase. They had done what no economist can condemn. They had solicited the privilege of trade, had received it, had bought land, had built factories, and were proprietors of forts, warehouses, habitations, and villages, whose popula-

tion was under their authority. The most special pleader for the rights of the native races in Hindustan, can urge nothing against these transactions—they were purely commercial. If arms had been employed, it was in defence of a trade which had been attacked, and no attempt made to conquer.¹ This may be described as having closed the first era of British intercourse with India. The next opens upon war and an important cause of conquest, which laid broad and deep the foundations of an empire. It will be necessary to show that this train of events was introduced, not, by a rapacious spirit of ambition, blinding the Company to honour and justice; but, by a combination of circumstances, which involved them beyond retrieve in the politics of the country. Great phenomena had already been displayed, and were still passing in the fortunes of India. Nothing is more remarkable in the East than the origin and growth of power which, nowhere else in the world, is encouraged by similar means. The empire of the Mogul spread far over the face of the region; but the operation of its authority was irregular; and, in some parts, overcome by another suddenly

¹ Mill: British India, iii., 85.

springing up in the midst of the tributary state. To understand the course of subsequent events, it is now necessary to view in outline the political history of India since the first invasion by the hordes of the north.

CHAPTER V.

INDIA UNDER THE MOGULS.

DURING some ages the Scythian shepherds of Central Asia had rioted in victory throughout the regions contiguous to their own, when Mahmoud, son of Subuhtagi, succeeded to the throne of Ghuzni. By him the Mohammedan arms were carried through various provinces in India—burning the temples, breaking the idols, and plundering the sacred treasures;¹ until after twelve campaigns, the diamonds, rubies, and pearls, of Somnat, were poured at his feet, and the Ghaznevide dynasty was established.² The successors of Mahmoud lost the empire he acquired, and the Gaurian or Afghan House

¹ Dow, i. 66.

² Gibbon: Decline and Fall, x., 337.

became supreme. In 1525, Ibrahim, the last sovereign of this line, was deprived of his throne and his life, by Baber, a descendant of Timur Shah, who swept India with a tide of conquest, and founded the Mogul dynasty. At the close of the seventeenth century, Aurungzebe held this splendid throne, which he left to princes who wasted its wealth and allowed its lustre to expire.¹

If we examine the political map of India during the reign of Aurungzebe, we find the empire of that potentate including almost the whole of Hindustan, with large tracts in the contiguous regions. The boundary line commenced beyond the Ganges, where Jurilgunge is now situated, and passing northwards into Boutan retreated along the southern frontier of Sikkim, skirted the valley of Nepaul, and trended northwards until it enclosed Kabul, where it turned to the south, traversed the Indus near Shikarpur, and was broken by the sea a little to the east of Hyderabad. On the peninsula we find it again, along the southern extremity of Concan, extending towards Coimbator, but including the country about Goa, Canara, the Malabar coast, and all the region from the Godavery to Kadur, at Cape

¹ Mill : iii., 433.

Comorin, and ending a short distance to the north of Tranquebar.¹

This immense extent, including the richest countries in the world, was nominally subject to the imperial throne of Delhi; but the tenure of power held by the Mogul was in many provinces exceedingly equivocal. The Subahdars and Nawabs, who divided authority under him, were in themselves tyrants of a lesser kind, of whom some enjoyed all but the titles of independent princes, whom it required armies to re-conquer, whenever they ventured to rebel.² Still, the splendour of the chief potentate of India, whose treasury was filled with the tribute of so many opulent states, was probably little exaggerated by the early travellers. Whatever wealth there was in the land flowed into the coffers of the monarch, his deputies, his favourites, and the band of nobles encircling his throne. No others dared to enjoy, or at least to exhibit, the signs of riches; and if a man revelled in the luxury of a gorgeous harim, it was secluded within dingy walls, so that the mask of poverty might hide this dangerous treasure. The vast retinue that followed the Mogul on his journeys made almost

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, Map.

Francis Catrou : History of the Mogul Dynasty.

a famine as they went, for the moving of his camp was as the transport of a city.¹ Priests also shared in the spoils of the population; for, in spite of the Mohammedan crusade, the temples of the Hindu faith still concealed coffers of gold and gems, laid up by the liberal piety of the pilgrims and devotees who annually thronged to the sacred shrine. Private individuals, as I have said, did not so often amass riches, or, if they possessed, seldom displayed them; for the rapacity of their oppressors possessed all the means necessary to enforce its claim.²

As for the people, Sismondi justly describes their state. They were slaves, depending for liberty, life, and the means of life, upon their lords; being cursed with what Voltaire has termed the condition most antagonistic to human happiness—they owned a master. With them to acquire power was the principal chance of enjoying opulence and safety together. To accomplish this end, rivals were not only to be defeated, but destroyed; and these characteristics of society in India gave rise to the inveterate conflicts which devastated and depopulated the country. The superior skill and potent engines of war

¹ Bernier : *Voyages dans les Etats du Grand Mogul*, i., 218.

² Mackinnon : *History of Civilization*, ii., 204.

possessed by the Europeans, rendered them valuable allies. Their friendship was sought to be secured by treaties, trading privileges, grants, and liberal engagements, which the native princes afterwards endeavoured to evade. In this manner they became debtors to the English, and cessions of territory were made to cancel the obligation. It will be seen that a similar process preceded many of our acquisitions. In other instances, the cause of conquest was the provocation of war continually renewed, until humanity, justice, the claims of peace, the suggestions of a dignified policy, the safety of British subjects, the interests of industry and commerce, rendered it necessary to find the end of a destructive struggle in the absorption of the enemy's dominions. Other features vary the general view of British conquests in India, but these are prominent, and I shall seek to show how our empire has been forced to expand by circumstances of the kind I have described.

CHAPTER VI.

COURSE OF BRITISH CONQUESTS.

It may be useful, at the commencement of this inquiry, to lay down the dates of the Company's acquisitions in chronological order. They may afterwards be taken in groups—politically and geographically considered.

Madras was purchased in 1639 from the Hindu dynasty of Beejannugger; Bombay was ceded by the Portuguese in 1664; Fort St. David was bought in 1691; and Calcutta, with its dependent villages, in 1700.

The Twenty-four Pergunnahs in 1759; Chittagong, Burdwan, and Midnapoor, in 1760; Bengal, Bahar, Orissa, and the Jaghire, in 1765; and the Northern Circars in 1766, were, during the

administration of Lord Clive, acquired from the Nawab of Bengal, from the Nizam, from the Nawab of Arcot, and from the Great Mogul.

The Zemindary of the sacred city of Benares in 1776; the little Island of Salsette in the same year; with the Nagore and the Guntoo Circar in 1778, were, during the administration of Warren Hastings, acquired from the Vizier of Oude, from the predatory Mahrattas, from the Rajah of Tanjore and from the Nizam.

Under the administration of Lord Cornwallis the little Island of Pinang, in the Straits of Malacca, was in 1786 acquired from the King of Quedah, with the Malabar districts, Dindigul, Salem, and Baramahl, from the proud and warlike Tippoo Sultan, in 1792. Coimbatore, Canara, Wynnaad, and Tanjore, in 1799; the Nizam's acquisitions from Tippoo Sultan, in 1800; the Carnatic, Gorruckpoor, the Lower Doab, Bareilly and Bundelcund, in 1801; Kuttack, Balasore, the Upper Doab, and Delhi, in 1803, with the Guzerat district in 1805, were by the Marquis of Wellesley acquired from Tippoo Sultan, the Rajah of Tanjore, the Nizam, the Nawab of the Carnatic, the Vizier of Oude, the Peishwah, or head of the Mahratta confederacy, the Rajah of Berar, Dowlat Rao Sindiah, and the Guicowar.

In 1816, Kumaon and part of Turaee; in 1817, Sanghur, Kuttah, Darwar, and Ahmedabad; in 1818, Kandeish, Poonah, the Koncan, Ajmeer, the Southern divisions of the Mahratta Empire, the Nerbudda districts, Patna, and Sumbhulpure; in 1820, districts in the Southern Kascan; and in 1822, Bejahpur and Ahmednuggur were, during the administration of the Marquis of Hastings, acquired from the Sovereign of Nepaul, from the Peishwah, the Guicowar, Holkar, Sindiah, the Rajahs of Berar, and Sawantwarree, and from the Nizam.

Lord Amherst, in 1826, acquired Assam, Arracan, Tavoy, Yess, Tenasserim, and other districts from the Sovereign of Lahore and from the King of Ava. In 1834, Lord Bentinck acquired Koorg.

Kachar, Jynteth, Salam, Kurnoul, Loodhiana, with the adjacent districts, Sindh, and the Punjab, with the possessions not included within the range of this inquiry, have since been added to the enormous mass of British Empire in the East. Scarcely was one of these acts of territorial extension performed without the censure of a party in England, as well as India. That they were all grounded on the most refined views of justice, or the most solid policy, is more, per-

haps, than can safely be asserted. That they were so, however, with one or two exceptions, may be shown, I believe, from the abundant evidence which the industry and literary skill of writers beyond enumeration, have laid before the public. Numerous writers, indeed, have adopted other views from the author to whom I have alluded as the great assailant of the Company's policy in the Carnatic,¹ to the "Ex-political"² whose powerful and fertile pen, combined with that of Colonel Outram, to condemn the transactions in Sindh;³ but while deferring to their experience and knowledge, other authorities render me confident in rejecting their views. It will be an interesting inquiry, and the result will doubtless be a testimony without reserve to the integrity with which the East India Company have upheld in the East, unshaken and unstained, the honour of the British name and the interests of the British nation.

¹ Hist. and Man. of E.I.C.

² Dry Leaves from Young Egypt.

³ Outram—Commentary on Sindh.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RAJAH OF TANJORE.

FROM the commencement of British intercourse with India to the period we have now reached, the spirit of ambition had not, according to the confessions of all witnesses, invaded the councils of the merchants. Hitherto, their least favourable judge admits the Company had preserved intact their character as a trading association. It had carried on its affairs, not through force of arms, not even by active policy, but in an humble attitude, under the protection or tyranny of the Mohammedan powers.¹ From an early date, the Directors at home pressed on the attention of their ministers in India, that

¹ Mill: *British India*, iii., 85.

the acquisition of territory was not desired.¹ They had repeatedly urged that point, and declared themselves averse from conquest.² The idea of a dominion over the soil inspired them, not with enthusiasm, but fear, and in none of the documents under their seal, can we discover that spirit of rapacity which has, by their prosecutors at the bar of history, been bitterly denounced against them.³

We now enter, indeed, a period of war, followed by conquest, which laid the foundation of the British Indian Empire. It is important fully to notice the origin of great change in the affairs of Hindustan which then began, that our Asiatic system may not be hidden behind that sacred veil which a statesman said should be drawn over the beginnings of all governments,— an origin only sanctified by its obscurity.⁴ The principal cause of this, as of most other revolutions, was weak and wicked policy, which divided the people, reduced them to poverty, and gave the land to desolation. The personal ambition of princes and chiefs, struggling for every seat

¹ General Letter to Bengal, 1719—Auber, i., 24.

² General Letter to Bengal, 1721—Auber, i., 25,

³ Bolt: Considerations on the Affairs of Bengal, 1772.

⁴ Burke: Speech against Hastings, xiii., 95.

of authority, from the zemindary of a few villages to the Imperial throne of Delhi, made of the whole region a populous wilderness, where memory alone recalled the name of peace. Tranquillity was among the traditions of a remoter time. There was not even the equivocal grandeur of absolute power; there was only the title of king supreme, and every low aspirant whose talents, cruelty, audacity, or successful peculation, could raise a body of armed adherents, shook in his hand a petty sceptre, and laid claim to the tribute of that great race which grovelled supinely at the feet of successive conquerors.¹ It was, therefore, by the happy fortune of humanity that events developed themselves in the subjugation of India by the civilization of Europe.

The contest with France, suspended by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, drew the English into the politics of the native states. Dupleix, in his sanguine fancy, had already planned the conquest of an Oriental empire. He saw himself in the visions of his hope, ruling over millions of Asiatics, with the tribute of Golconda laid at his feet, and the hereditary pride of Rajpootana bent to his will. His vanity was equal to his ambition,

¹ Dow : Decline of the Empire.

and far superior to his principle. To perpetuate a name, associated with victory, he disclaimed the scruples of a conscience never too sensitive in political transactions; but, though his genius was brilliant, his plans were greater than his power; and the deep hatred he bore the English was further embittered by their triumph. The misunderstanding which existed between him and La Bourdonnais, with the jealousies of his enemies at home, mitigated the danger of the schemes he formed. The events, however, to which these gave rise, rendered it impossible for another European power to remain neutral on the ground of Indian politics.

First, however, it is necessary to describe a detached transaction, which, though not connected with the great chain of conquests, must, by an impartial writer, be noticed. It is that with Tanjore. It has been represented in a disreputable light by judges laboriously consistent in their censure of the Company. To explain it is easy; and here, however unfortunate it may seem for the anticipations of my preface, candour requires me to blame the conduct of the English. The ground I choose, however, is not exactly the same with that of the able, but prejudiced, historian,¹

¹ Mill : History of British India, iii., 86.

whose errors have been so powerfully exposed by his learned commentator's judgment,¹ or with that of the skilful but rash disclaimer, who covered under an anonymous title page, his headlong attack on the East India Company.² They are, it appears, reasonably to be condemned, not for commencing, but for concluding the war as they did. They engaged in it without violating any natural or accepted law; they withdrew from it at the suggestion of a lame policy, which did not increase their reputation for faith or courage.

Among the rajahates, into which India was divided at the time of the Mohammedan invasion, Tanjore was one. It is a district lying along the sea coast of the southern Carnatic, between Chingleput on the north, and Madras on the south. It is excelled only by Burdwan in Bengal, for the abundance of its agricultural resources. The labour of its expert and energetic husbandmen has fertilized even the sandy tracts by raising huge mounds, to spread over them the intercepted waters of the Cavery. The population is composed of Brahmins, Sudras, and the descendants of those Arabian emigrants who fled

¹ Wilson: Notes to Mill, iii., 86.

² History and Management of E.I.C., 55.

from their rainless native plains during the tyranny of Ben Yusef. The Muslims, however, never conquered Tanjore, or settled in it as the dominant class. The ancient religion of India has, therefore, flourished in the province, which is adorned by innumerable edifices sacred to the rites of that mysterious and pervading faith. The massive, but graceful, gateways of colossal pagodas ornament the approaches to nearly every village; and the roads are frequented by numerous pilgrims passing to and from these holy places. Two hundred and eighty-two miles from Madras, is situated the capital. It contains the most beautiful pyramidal temple in Hindustan, with the celebrated bull of black marble, and lies in the midst of a rich picturesque country. Here, in remote ages, was the seat of learning in southern India; and here the horrid sacrifice of women at their husbands' funeral pyres was frequent; but English rule has changed the manners of the people, who, now partly released from the bloody and debasing servitude formerly exacted by their priestly masters, engage in those branches of industry and traffic which are peculiarly agreeable to them.¹

'This valuable province, though never actually

¹ Hamilton : Hindustan, ii., 452.

subdued by the Muslims, was dependent, in name at least, on the Imperial Government of Delhi, but connected also by ancient alliance with the kingdom of Golconda and Bejapur.¹ Tukojee, its lawful prince, dying, left three sons. The eldest succeeded him, but was, as well as the second, removed by death. Sahujee, the third, a legitimate son, and—subject to the Mogul's will —legal heir to the throne,² was driven from his seat by an illegitimate brother,³ a usurper and a murderer.⁴ The first of these titles justified his overthrow; the second belonged all but universally to Asiatic sovereigns—though by no means to them alone. Sahujee fled to the English, and implored their aid. He promised, if successful, to cede to them the fort and district of Devi-cottah, and pay all expenses of the war.⁵ The expedition, of which the details belong to general history, not to my present task, was at first unsuccessful; but a second effort gave the English a footing in the territory. They were then induced by the reigning king to abandon their

¹ Hist. and Man. of E.I.C., 57.

² Mill : iii., 87.

³ Wilson : Notes to Mill, iii., 88.

⁴ Revolutions of Tanjore : MS., qu. Hist. and Man.

⁵ Mill : iii., 86.

purpose, to secure Sahujee—to whom he granted a pension—and withdraw from the transaction¹. It is indeed admitted that the conquest of Tanjore for their ally would have been a frantic attempt, so that they arrested their progress when it would have been madness to proceed.² Still I do not in this instance claim for the Company entire immunity from blame. They had bound themselves to an undertaking, which they were persuaded by the enemy of their client to forsake. Embracing the Rajah's cause was an act of policy, whether or not wise may be disputed. So was the alliance between England and Holland against Austria. So was the alliance against Napoleon. So are all armed alliances. Their expediency is ground of debate; but the right to form them is uncontested in every independent power. Such leagues are recognised by the law of nations. But Sahujee appealed in vain to the faith of treaties; consequently, in an ethical point of view, it is not for opening, but for abandoning the war, that the English are exposed to censure, especially as they received

¹ Orme: *Transactions in Hindustan*, i., 109.

² Mill: *British India*, iii., 91.

from their enemy the reward promised by their friend.¹ Thus they inaugurated their grand career by a flagrant act of infidelity to their engagements. This it is gratifying that history still remembers to condemn. Every offence against the faith of treaties, is a crime against the general law of nations; and every successful violation of this diminishes the confidence of mankind in the great principles of ethics and equity.

¹ Thornton : History of India.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST WAR OF SUCCESSION IN THE CARNATIC.

A PORTENTOUS revolution was preparing in the social and political system of India. The scene opens upon the famous war for establishing Mohammed Ali in the vice-royalty of the Carnatic. It is an era of Oriental history—the dawn of British Empire in the East—and the first link in that chain of wars which last subdued the country of the Five Rivers, and will probably continue to subdue while an inch of the whole region remains to be disputed. The English were drawn into the struggle. An historian, not averse to harsh judgment of their acts, allows that they had resolved to be simple spectators of the drama.¹ It is, however, among those trans-

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, i., 407.

actions which have most unequivocally divided the opinions of politicians. Writers have exhausted the vocabulary of rancour, orators have wielded their most polished arms of eloquence, to assail its justice; but the real narrative shines clearly out, after this lapse of time, from amid the chaos of adverse statements, which obscured it from the sight of men in the eighteenth century. The simple truth stands uninjured amid the ruined piles of misrepresentation that are heaped around it on all sides, shattered by contact with its invulnerable surface. The English name, though darkened by a passing storm of calumny, acquired in that struggle a reputation for faith in convention, for valour in arms, and for mercy in the use of victory.¹ It will be interesting to inquire into the causes which justified that memorable war, and being forgotten, unknown, or distorted in England, called forth all the acrimony of those who were hostile to the East India Company.

The extensive province known as the Carnatic, comprehends all the territory directly between Cape Comorin and the little Gundagama River, which flows into the sea at Mohtapilly. It thus extends a length of about five hundred

¹ Captain Thornton: *Summary History*, 16.

and sixty miles, with an average breadth of seventy-five miles. These divisions are recognised by geographers; the southern, the central, and the northern, including many rich districts and considerable towns. The climate is one of the hottest in India, and the soil of unequal capabilities, though not, on the whole, remarkably fertile. Rice, cotton, and indigo, are the chief productions; but none of these are produced in any extraordinary abundance. Formerly the horrors of famine, aggravated by the misrule of the Indian princes, frequently devastated the country, and drove the wretched peasants into the extreme of despair. Even since the happy revolution in its fortunes, scarcities have occurred in the Carnatic oftener than in other parts of India, though now, when the population is in need, it is fed from the exuberant bosom of the earth in contiguous provinces, along the rich borders of the Ganges. An improved system of revenue has also greatly contributed to increase the fruits of the soil. A population of about five millions occupies the country. They are chiefly Hindus, whose manners, notwithstanding the infusion of the Muslim and European elements, retain still their original characteristics in singular purity.

No part of India is so richly adorned with monuments of priestly influence as the Carnatic. Temples and forts are scattered at intervals over all the wide plain; but the strongholds, neglected during the long influence of peace, are decaying under the touch of time; while villages multiply, and are built of more durable materials than formerly, because their inhabitants are no longer forced to be continually preparing for flight from the ravages of an intermittent war.¹

Ten years after the commencement of the fourteenth century the Mohammedans appeared in the Carnatic, and levied tribute on the people. Gradually the country became a province of the Mogul Empire, and at the period we have now reached was dependent on the Deccan, itself a province of the dominion bequeathed by Shah Jehan.

The word Deccan in the Sanscrit language means "the south," but during the Mohammedan sway signified, politically, the countries between the Nerbudda and the Krishna Rivers. When Aurungzebe completed its conquest in 1690, it was divided into six vice-royalties;—though it is at present composed of Gundwana,

¹ Hamilton: Hindustan, ii., 402.

Orissa, the Northern Circars, Kandeish, Berar, Beder, Hydrabad, Aurungabad, and Bejapur.

The English established at Madras, and the French at Pondicherry, on the Coromandel coast, saw before them the field of Indian politics. Most closely related to them was the Carnatic, which was divided under their rival influence, though that of Dupleix had hitherto been paramount. The distractions of the country, indeed, gave to the ambitious French adventurer a strong hold on its affairs. Our countrymen, nevertheless, were animated by the desire to maintain their commercial interests. Hence arose the complications which followed, since the choice was for them to abandon India, or defend with arms their position on its shores. Nor, for the sake of peace, have we to lament those struggles. Every cloud of war which rose over the horizon, bringing victory to the English, broke in abundant blessings on the people. The irruptions of the Arab, the Persian, and the Tartar hordes, wasted the country, consumed it with flames, and quenched those flames in blood; but the progress of the new race reclaimed the desolation thus produced. It suited, indeed, the object of a party orator to assert that the same consequences were evolved from the frauds and intrigues of

the Company, as from the ferocity of those conquerors who blackened all the land with ashes;¹ but the evidence of more than half-a-century has belied his declamation, and shown in a fair contrast the effects of Mohammedan and Christian rule.

England and France then appeared natural enemies. The short spell of peace obtained at Aix-la-Chapelle, only broke in India the reign of war. So far from softening their mutual animosities, it only allowed each to brace her nerves for another struggle. The peculiar character of Indian civilization opened an arena to them, and France offering battle in the Carnatic, England was forced to take up the challenge.

The Nizam-ul-Mulk was Subahdar of the Deccan. Having secured, in the course of many wars, his delegated power, he died. In Asiatic states, the rival interests, the consequent jealousy, and the profligate ambition, engendered by tyranny, too often made sons, when they grew to manhood, the enemies of their fathers, whose affections usually retreated upon some younger head. Such a circumstance exercised an important influence on the affairs of the Carnatic, the Deccan, and, indeed, of all India. The Nizam

¹ Burke: Speech on Fox's E.I.C. Bill.

dying, left five sons. The eldest being at Delhi, as Omrah and Captain-General of the army, could not succeed.¹ The third, fourth, and fifth, having no claim, and apparently no desire to rule, were wise enough to be content with obscurity.² The second had once been in arms against his father, and was not deep in his confidence or favour; but he had been reconciled with him, and acted as his deputy during the last years of a long reign, distinguished as much for its villany as for its ability.³ He was his legal successor, unless the Mogul was inclined to turn the succession from its usual course.

The Nizam, however, had by a favourite daughter a grandson, who, when his uncle had outgrown the old man's affections, clung to his skirts.⁴ It had been rumoured that he had been chosen by him to fill the vacant seat on the tributary throne of the Deccan. We do not find any authoritative record of such a will. In India, especially, a document is difficult to prove, because easy to counterfeit. A seal, forged without trouble, is all the witness to its truth.⁵ Had it,

¹ Mill: British India, iii., 99.

² Dow: Decline of the Empire, iii., 52.

³ Hist. and Man. of E.I.C., 70.

⁴ Orme: Military Transactions, i., 114.

⁵ Mill: British India, 135.

however, been a genuine document, it was worthless ; as it was no part of the Nizam's prerogative to nominate a successor.¹

Nazir Jung, therefore, the second son of the late Nizam, was, by acknowledgment of French writers, heir to the Subah, according to European laws of succession.² To confirm this he produced patents from the Great Mogul, which declared him Subahdar. Hidayet, nevertheless, the grandson of Ul-Mulk, denied his claim, and declared himself as Nizam Murzapha Jung, a name by which he will henceforward be recognised. None could decide. The rivals fled to the great appeal of arms. Nazir Jung seized the treasury, and rallied to his cause five-and-twenty thousand men, retreated to the east of Golconda, and waited an occasion to give his enemy battle. Chunda Saheb, one of those pretenders to power, with ambition for their only title, who swarmed in the East—an evil extinguished under British rule—offered his services to him, claiming, as a reward, to be recognised as Nawab of the Carnatic.³

Meanwhile, there was for this province also a

¹ Hist. and Man. of E.I.C., 71.

² Dubois de Jancigny—Xavier Raymond : L'Inde, 406.

³ Mill : British India, iii., 100.

legitimate Nawab, who was hostile to Dupleix. When, therefore, the united forces of Murzapha Jung and Chunda Saheb, desiring his overthrow, applied to the French for aid, they granted it, and joined with a considerable body of troops. Anwar-ad-deen, confident in his right, claimed from the English assistance, which they refused, being resolved to hold back as long as possible from the struggle.¹ It would be an instructive study for the writers and orators who love to exercise their eloquence on the rabid thirst of conquest displayed by our countrymen in India, to examine their policy during the war of succession in the Carnatic, and learn, even from the Company's most bitter enemy, who did not perhaps see the force of his admission, that the English long remained negligent spectators of a struggle which involved all their interests, if not their very existence, in that region.²

Thrown entirely on his own resources, the Nawab prepared for war, and a grand battle took place under the standard of the Carnatic. The French aided, and Murzapha Jung, victorious, proclaimed himself Subahdar of the Deccan. Anwar-ad-deen was slain, and his eldest

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, i., 411.

² Hist. and Man. of E.I.C., 72.

son fell into the hands of the enemy.¹ The conqueror's first act was to install Chunda Saheb into the empty seat of the Nawab. All the princes of the Coromandel coast were startled by this event, which placed the French, with two rebellious adventurers,² in bold defiance of the Imperial Government. The King of Tanjore was filled with alarm. He applied for succour to the Company. Though the influence of Dupleix was threatening to extinguish them; though the conflict had now become a European question, they refused to break the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle until the rebellious nature of the war was made manifest.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Ali, second son of the late Nawab Anwar-ad-deen, being legitimate successor to the throne, applied to the English for aid. Nazir Jung, he said, was sole heir to the Subah of the Deccan, as he to the rule of the Carnatic, both being approved by the Supreme Mogul. Still the English would lend no ear to his solicitations. Their views were, unlike those of the French, confined to the operations of trade. They had not yet ennobled their ambition to the conquest of an empire. Uncertain as to the

¹ Mill: British India, iii., 101.

² Lawrence: Narrative, 5.

truth of his claims, and still insensible of their own danger, they waited for intelligence from the Supreme Court of Delhi,¹ to which, within the circle of its just authority, they had pledged obedience. As a proof of their peaceful ideas, though not of their political foresight, it is to be remembered, they disarmed themselves; they dismissed to Europe the majority of their forces on that coast,² leaving a small body of men to watch affairs from Tritchinopoly, the capital of a district so named on the Cavery River.³ Indeed, they were at that time so weak, that they could scarcely be persuaded to resist with courage the torrent of hostile influences which rolled against them, looking with trepidation at the prospect of becoming warriors where they went as merchants. The free and adventurous genius of Dupleix seemed to preside over the politics of southern India. He had broken the spell which held the Europeans in subjection to the Indian powers; and little was wanting to accomplish the prophecy of his friend, that the throne of the Mogul would shortly tremble at his name.⁴

¹ Penhoen : *Empire Anglais*, i., 411.

² Orme : *Military Trans.*, i., 138.

³ Mill : *British India*, iii., 114.

⁴ *Memoire Dupleix*—Mill, iii., 113.

The French, thus exhilarated by the hope of brighter triumphs, then challenged a war with the English by inciting Chunda Saheb to attack them in Tritchinopoly. He promised, but delayed to enter on the expedition, while another was prepared by this triple alliance of rebels against Tanjore.

In the meanwhile, Nazir Jung, the legitimate Subahdar of the Deccan, being summoned to Delhi, went on his march. A countermand reached him, and, in obedience to the Imperial Government, he turned about to meet Murzapha Jung and Chunda Saheb. Everywhere the people started up around his flag. He prayed assistance from the English. Convinced at length of his right,¹ the Council of Madras ordered a troop to join Mohammed Ali.² The sword was drawn; the era of conquest had begun, and the conquerors could thenceforward fix no bounds to their achievements.

At this stage of the inquiry, it is important to remember the actual state of Indian politics at that period. The Great Mogul was still, though with feebler sway than Aurungzebe, lord paramount of Hindustan. The Deccan was subject

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, i., 415.

² Thornton : History of India.

to him; the Carnatic was subject to the Deccan. Murzapha Jung, the self-styled Nawab, and Chunda Saheb, his client, were therefore rebels, and the French were the allies of rebels. Nazir Jung and Mohammed Ali were lawful heirs to the vacant seats of power. Recognised by the Imperial Court of Delhi, by a formal commission,¹ they were the only legitimate pretenders.² Mohammed Ali, our ally, was not only received by the Subahdar, but acknowledged by the Mogul.³ If, then, we admit the authority of thrones—which in the East it was then impossible not to do, since they governed barbarians incapable of freedom—it is evident the English, in allying themselves with Mohammed Ali, allied themselves with the Imperial Government—to which they were allied by treaty—against rebels who broke the peace of the empire. The French leagued themselves with two adventurers, as they are acknowledged by the most uncompromising detractor of the Company to have been, and thus was caused that war which was pregnant with so many important consequences. In this

¹ Dow: Decline of the Empire, 48.

² History and Management of the East India Company, 32.

³ Rous: Appendix, which gives additional proofs.

History and Management of the East India Company, 71.

way is established its justification before the moral law. Its policy is a question between those who admit and those who deny the value of our Indian commerce. A torrent was rising which threatened to overwhelm them,¹ and the English took arms in self-defence, as well as in support of their ally.² Had they refused to meet the danger with a manly front, Dupleix would probably have swept them from the shores of the East, and British supremacy in Europe might have been lost on the plains of India.

In 1754, owing to the spirit of the English, peace was concluded, and Mohammed Ali acknowledged Nawab of the Carnatic. In 1756, war again broke out between France and England; but in India tranquillity was for some time preserved.

The consequence of this inquiry I assume to be, that the English policy was at once honourable and wise. They were driven into the struggle through the force of events, not seduced into it by their ambition; their reluctance to open, and their desire to close, the campaign preventing them reaping many fruits at which avarice would have aimed. As it was, at the end of the con-

¹ Mill: British India, iii., 113.

² Lawrence: Narrative, 5.

test, they extended their influence only, without extending their territorial dominion.¹ The justification, however, of the armed alliance with Mohammed Ali is of the utmost importance to the result aimed at in this view of the political history of India. It is impossible to magnify the importance of that war, for thence sprang a long succession of events which engaged the English in a struggle with numerous great powers, and finally led them from conquest to conquest until they were masters of Hindustan.

Thenceforward they were irretrievably entangled in the politics of the East. The Mogul had accepted the service of their arms; that was a sign rather than a cause of his approaching overthrow; for the state that calls in foreign aid to suppress rebellion, invariably invokes a power which will one day become its master. He desired them to fight his battles because he had lost much of the power which once attached to his crown; he did not become weak because of their alliance. They, however, fulfilled what seems an ordinance of nature, in rising upon the decay of his throne. Such a catastrophe was inevitable in the course of things. He was an Eastern potentate of barbaric grandeur; they were

Auber: British Power in India, i., 51.

Europeans under the influence of what may be termed a destiny. I believe there is a natural law which, when civilization and barbarism meet on the same soil, subdues the one by the force of the other. The English in India acted under this irresistible impulse. Two systems, based on hostile principles, and pent up within one sphere, to which both are foreign, cannot exist together; the inferior will be absorbed by the superior element. As the Malay prevailed over the Papuan, the Mohammedan over the Hindu, the Roman over the Briton; so the western nations prevail over the ruder populations of the East.

CHAPTER IX.

FIRST WAR IN BENGAL.

FROM the Carnatic we turn to a greater theatre of Indian politics—the rich and spacious province of Bengal. The causes which led, first to its virtual, and then to its actual subjugation by the English, may be briefly developed. Justice will, then, I believe, decide that the Company acted in candour and faith according to the law of nations.

Bengal lies towards the east of Hindustan. To the north, it reaches the territories of Nepaul, of Sikkim, and of Boutan. To the south, it has the sea flowing into that extensive bay to which it gives a name. On the east, Assam and Ava are shut out by the Chittagong Hills; and, on the west, is the province of Bahar. These boun-

daries enclose a space of three hundred and fifty miles in length, by three hundred in breadth, protected against invasion by various natural defences. On the north, a low tract of land, from ten to twenty miles wide, is covered with an impenetrable thicket of forest, grass, and jungle, and beyond rise the thinly-peopled slopes of the northern mountains. Shallows and woods, with one difficult sea-port, shut up the approaches on the south; on the west, a sterile country, full of difficulties, must be traversed. The Ganges divides the province and forbids the passage of cavalry; while, though in the north-west an avenue is open, a strong line of natural defences is supplied in that direction.

Bengal is an extensive plain, diversified only by a few slight elevations. On the borders of the Ganges a wide tract is subject to an annual overflow; and this part of the country being formerly known as the Bengala, probably gave the province its actual name. In the districts near the sea, immense levels are spread over with rice fields; above, beautiful harvests of wheat and barley flow, as a wavy tide of gold, over the surface in vast sweeps, amid which glitter, in all directions, the waters of winding streams. These, to the infinite perplexity of

geographers, are continually deserting their courses. The natives, however, care nothing, in a religious sense, for such changes. They attach themselves to the channel, not the stream, and perform their rites in the old bed long after it is forsaken by the current. The Bramaputra, further east than the Ganges, though it joins that stream at its embouchure, is one of the largest though least sacred rivers in India. Its magnificent volume has never attracted much notice; for it flows for the most part through barren, uncultivated, barbarous countries, while, on the borders of the Ganges, lie the seats of religious and romantic tradition. It waters populous lands, fertile, rich, and inhabited by an industrious and skilful nation, celebrated for its excellence in some of the most refined and poetical arts of peace. is that extreme region of the habitable world, pointed out by the Greek historian, which has received the most beautiful gifts of nature.¹ There the sacerdotal empires of antiquity flourished, and cities of stately architecture were inhabited by merchants who traded in spices and gold, with artificers who wrought ivory, silk, and wool, into all the forms in which luxury can delight.²

¹ Herodotus : Θαλα, 105.

² Heeren : Indian Antiquities, ii., 273.

The climate of Bengal, influenced by dry and rainy seasons, might be indefinitely improved by industry. The drainage of the soil, the clearing of the jungle, and an improvement in the habits of the people, produced by the elevation of their minds, would tend to this happy result. It is certain, though it may seem a paradox, that, to purify their manners, would be to purify the atmosphere in which they live. For, amid the noble woods and blooming vegetation of Bengal, rank weeds and bushes overlay the earth; pools stagnate in their shade, loathsome animals breed in their recesses, decaying leaves and pestilential marshes exhale miasmata the most pernicious. The natives, to hide their women, bury their villages deep in the jungle, and thus injure their own health. All this is within the scope of reform; and that is gradually taking place. The promise of the future is contained in the achievements of the past.

The soil is generally rich ; and though the system of tillage is rude, an immense produce is raised. Rice, tobacco, indigo, cotton, the mulberry tree, and the poppy, are largely cultivated, besides a variety of oil seeds, pulse, and grain. The mango, the coco, and the areca palm, flourish in handsome groves, to which the people

are attached by that pious reverence for the works of their ancestors, which is common among half-civilized races. The bambu—of universal service in the East—supplies the peasant with materials for his home. Cattle yield him milk, and would be far more profitable if their flesh were consumed as food.¹ The internal traffic of the country consists chiefly in the barter of grain and salt, with cotton and sugar. The English trade in piece goods, silk, saltpetre, opium, and indigo, with a variety of other materials too numerous to be detailed in any but a commercial register.² The population of Bengal may be estimated at forty millions; a mass of humanity to be reclaimed from idolatry, ignorance, and slavery, by British rule. The work has gone far; and we may now inquire how the English were introduced to the rule of this wealthy province.

Towards the close of Aurungzebe's reign, the Subahs of Bengal, Bahar, Orissa, and Allahabad, were governed by his grandson, Azim-u-Shan, who succeeded to the Imperial throne. He appointed as his deputy in Bengal and Orissa, Jaffir Khan, a chief descended from those Tartar conquerors, who, springing from the savage wilder-

¹ See Shirley Hibberd: Notes to Porphyry.

² See Rennel, Buchanan, Colebrooke, Grant—and Hamilton, i. 1.

ness of Central Asia, have roamed in search of a richer inheritance, and exerted a powerful influence on the fortunes of the human race. On the death of Shah Alum, while the empire was convulsed by those civil distractions which were symptoms of its decline, this man remained in his government, too formidable to be removed. He bequeathed it to a successor; but arms alone could elect a king, and Ali Verdi Khan, after a course of war, and a few revolutions of authority, sat on the tributary throne; one of the successful adventurers whom the great anarchy of India raised to power. He ruled with magnificent ability, administered some kind of justice, and resisted the encroachments of the Mahrattas, who had spread wide their destructive triumphs, and, invited by a rebellious governor, subdued Berar. Sujah-a-Dowlah, son of Ali Verdi's nephew, succeeded in peace to the Musnud of Bengal. He inherited says the historian,—who is judicious where his prejudice against the Company is not concerned,—a large share of princely vices. He was ignorant, selfish, sensual, cruel, impatient, irascible, vindictive, and possessed of a bull dog's ferocity. He came to the throne a ruffian, plundering in all directions to fill his coffers, and dealing around him that

damnation on earth which seems the prerogative of an Asiatic sovereign.¹ Language cannot exaggerate the character of this man; but decency forbids the employment of terms sufficiently significant to paint him as he was.

His indiscriminate tyranny, rioting in the blood of the people, struck also at the very men who were servile instruments of his will. One of his officers, to escape the destruction with which he was threatened by the caprices of such a master, sought refuge with the English at Calcutta. Sujah-a-Dowlah, who hated our countrymen, thirsted for a pretext to attack them. He forced them into the war which followed.² The improvement in their fortifications excited his jealousy, and he resolved to make the case of the fugitive a ground for quarrel. It mattered nothing that his religion made hospitality a holy duty, and commanded all men to shelter the unfortunate. That is a law which has been held in more reverence by the dwellers in huts than by the inmates of palaces; for a sheik of the desert has usually a more sacred threshold than a prince of the East.

The Nawab sent to our countrymen, in the

¹ Mill: British India, iii., 162.

² Charles Hamilton: Description of India, i., 87.

character of an envoy, a spy, whose behaviour compelled the English to dismiss him from their city.¹ He then complained of the improvements the Europeans were making in the fortification of their own territory—improvements rendered necessary by an approaching war with the French. They returned him an answer as moderate as it was just.² He then immediately marched with an army, seized our factory at Cossimbazaar, retained the governor prisoner, and in spite of the frequent offers of accommodation which were made, prepared for war. All the devices of conciliation were exhausted to preserve peace. It was in vain: the Nawab was resolved upon hostilities. Though the English assumed an attitude of humility which only the most extreme weakness and peril could justify, their implacable enemy advanced. The siege of Calcutta followed. The city was captured. The horrors of the Black Hole, familiar to Europe from the narrative of a sufferer,³ signalised the event. The ingenuity, not to say the eloquence, of a British historian has been perverted to fabricate, or at least to suggest, a defence of this

¹ Mill: *British India*, iii., 163.

² Penhoen: *Empire Anglais*, ii., 18.

³ Howell: *Narratives of Suffering*.

celebrated crime.¹ It might appear to him heroic to defend what all the rest of mankind declared infamous; but that act is justly condemned as susceptible of no palliation.² It was the cruelty of a Mohammedan despot.³ A hint is, indeed, insinuated by another writer, on the authority of native accounts, that Sujah-a-Dowlah was innocent of the deed, and that stupidity, not wickedness, caused the misery which ensued to the victims.⁴ The ferocious character of the prince, however, renders this a weak plea for his reputation. It appears certain that by his will such vengeance was dealt on the English, and the blood of a hundred and forty-three unhappy men cried for punishment upon their murderers. This is no illiberal interpretation of history, for, clear Sujah-a-Dowlah of this crime, and he is still a monster. It was as notorious to the Europeans as it was to his own people, and his inhumanity was persevering.⁵

If ever a nation had cause of war, Great Britain then had. That people would have been unworthy of an empire which did not rise to

¹ Mill: British India, iii., 166.

² Wilson: Notes, iii., 168.

³ See Serafton's Account, 52.

⁴ Stewart: History of Bengal, 505.

⁵ Penhoen: Empire Anglais, ii., 33.

punish the author of such a crime. Had it occurred in Dover, instead of Calcutta; had a French general, instead of this barbarian Subahdar, been the chief actor, all posterity would have joined to praise the spirit which was awakened to chastise the offender; but the friends of aborigines, and the advocates of native princes, should recollect that the territory on the banks of the Hooghly was then as much Great Britain as London on the banks of the Thames. There are no geographical limits to a state. Wherever Englishmen are under their national flag, there they have a right to be protected, though the whole power of the Imperial navy should be required to defend them. It was, therefore, as a defence of themselves, not as an aggression on the natives of India, that our countrymen took up arms.¹ An expedition was fitted out. A blow was struck, by way of just reprisal,² and the English again opened negotiations for peace.³ The Nizam was implacable, and it was only a bold blow of Clive's that brought him to terms. War was again raging between France and England, but the weakness of the belligerents in India saved a battle.

¹ Thornton : State and Prospects of India, 20.

² Wilson : Notes to Mill, iii., 176.

³ Auber : British Power in India, i., 60.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRINCES OF BENGAL DETHRONED.

THE accommodation was not long protracted. The Nawab consented to a treaty, by which he restored the settlements of Calcutta, Cossimbazaar, and Dacca, and agreed to make restitution of the money and effects he had plundered, and compensate, as far as possible, for his crime, by granting privileges of trade. It was evident, however, that these overtures were made only to gain time, and amuse the English while he carried on negotiations with the French. His feelings were manifestly unchanged.

Proposals for neutrality were made between the French and English;¹ but the agreement of the officers at Calcutta was not confirmed by

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, ii., 45.

the Supreme Council, since they had no authority to make such a compact.¹ There was not that spirit in our rivals which could animate a lasting convention of this nature,² for they continued to intrigue with Sujah-a-Dowlah.³

Even Asiatic tyrants cannot always grow old amid the curses of a whole people. In Bengal the despotism of the Nizam, passing that line where even the lowest of humanity will refuse to suffer, scattered wide the seeds of sedition. His authority was, in itself, rebellious; for it owned no obligation to the Great Mogul, to whom, indeed, his subjection was merely nominal.⁴

Meanwhile the primitive throne itself was dissolving away, like a dream. An Afghan army had entered its dominions; an Afghan leader had assumed the government, under the title of Ahmed Shah; orders were spread to strike money in the name of a new Emperor; and the Nawab of Bengal, amid the breaking up of the political system of India, set his camp in motion, to avail himself of any occasion which might offer, to reap aggrandisement for his crown.⁵

¹ Wilson : Notes, iii., 179.

² Clive : Life, i., 179.

³ Thornton : State and Prospects of India, 21.

⁴ Mill : British India, iii., 157.

⁵ Auber : British Power in India, i., 63.

When, therefore, a new aspirant to the throne appeared, in the person of Meer Jaffir Khan, a relative of Ali Verdi, who was friendly to the Company,¹ the people and the army responded to his call. Preparations became ominous of change. Overtures were made to the English,² though it has been insinuated by a writer, that they opened them,³ and by an orator, that they were the original projectors of the revolution.⁴ To the Nizam they were bound by no convention. They were at open war with the French; and he, in defiance of good faith and the terms of the treaty, supplied their enemies with arms, money, and ammunition;⁵ incited them to invade Bengal; refused to pay the amount he had agreed upon, as compensation for the sack of Calcutta; and in every manner acted as a traitor to his engagements. Claim to the Musnud he had none. He held it simply by virtue of his strength, and his right departed with his power. The revolution was inevitable, whether the English interfered or not.⁶ It could hardly,

¹ Stewart: History of Bengal, 521.

² Life of Clive, i., 227.

³ Mill: British India, iii., 184.

⁴ Burke: Speech against Warren Hastings, xiii., 93.

⁵ Mill: British India, iii., 182.

⁶ Auber: British Power in India, i., 68.

therefore, be true that he was forced on the people,¹ who rose with acclamations to receive him.

Arrangements were made with him to secure the interests of British commerce, and the famous battle of Plassy gave the English a claim to his perpetual gratitude. He returned them prodigal assurances of reward; but they desired no more than the settlement of their just demands, which had been denied by the late Nizam. The extravagance and profligacy of his predecessor left Meer Jaffir a poor treasury, and he immersed himself too deeply in luxury with the parasites of his debauch to think of paying the debts of his throne. He occupied himself also with the affairs of the province, but did not disdain to engage himself further with the English.² They undoubtedly held him on the Musnud, while he remained there, against the pretensions of rival chiefs,³ though his ingratitude refused to acknowledge the obligation. Beyond a monopoly of the saltpetre in Bengal, they gained nothing. To those who can demonstrate that the creditor has no claims on his debtor, we concede the

¹ Burke: Speech against Hastings.

² Mill: British India, iii., 196.

³ Wilson: Notes, iii., 271.

injustice of the English ; but surely to no other. Be it remembered, however, that this is an essay to justify the general policy of the Company's government, not the profligacy of some among its servants.

Meer Jaffir Khan having misgoverned the country a short time, and by his treachery absolved the English from all allegiance to him, was deposed by the people, when Kossim Ali Khan was elected. Towards him there were two courses which might be pursued—to withdraw our assistance, or to support him, upon his affording us the means. The first would have been as dishonourable as dangerous, for a number of enemies stood around ready to descend on the unhappy natives of Bengal, who, helpless, timid, trained to servitude, crouched amid their plantations ready to swear allegiance to the first sword which a vigorous arm should raise against them. When they had resisted their oppressors, it was with the courage begot by fear, with that desperate convulsive effort which is the last appeal of a nation galled beyond the utmost limit of endurance. Their revolutions, however, were only successful when the army fought on the people's side, and in India as elsewhere, tyrants occasionally presumed too far on the disposition of

their military allies. When once the fear of English arms was withdrawn, a hundred adventurers were ready to start up and dispute the field. That would have been a blot on the Company's honour. They had acquired power in India. The most sacred duty of power is the protection of the weak, and to this they were peculiarly pledged in Bengal.

But no reason whatever existed that Kossim Ali Khan, collecting a superb revenue, should enjoy the support of the English without compensating them for the expense they thus incurred. It is not in our national disposition to insist that an association of merchants should squander its profits on the defence of a prince whose only claim upon their aid was his willingness to pay for it. They therefore required him to liquidate his predecessor's debt, which he did, and ceded for himself Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong.¹

Burdwan is a district on the Hooghly, containing, in 1784, more than five thousand square miles, though its limits have since been contracted. It is one of the most productive territories in India, blooming like a garden amid the wilderness which surrounds it. The population is of a

¹ Vansittart : Letter to the Court, 1760.

superior class, and very dense ; being nearly five hundred to the square mile, while new villages and substantial buildings multiply every year. South of this lies Midnapore, containing more than seven thousand square miles, but inferior to Burdwan in natural capabilities, as well as in the progress made by its inhabitants. Thick jungles cover a large portion of the district, while the people, instead of labouring to improve their circumstances, are slow to recover from the effects of the debasing tyranny to which they were during so many ages subjected. It was long before the men who had accumulated wealth under the Subahdars and Nawabs, and hidden it away in holes or caves, could persuade themselves that their new rulers were just, and bring to light their buried treasures.

Chittagong is a district at the south-east extremity of Bengal, contiguous to Tiperah and Arracan. Its area is about three thousand square miles, partly of barren hills, partly of arable land, and its inhabitants, reduced under their native princes to wretched tribes subsisting on the flesh of elephants, require a long course of enlightened rule to elevate them to the natural dignity of man.¹ These formed almost the first

¹ Hamilton : Hindustan, i., 147, 153, 165.

acquisitions of the English—beyond what was absolutely necessary for the protection of their settlements.¹ They were procured in lieu of those payments of money which it was necessary the Nawab should make; but their cession had at no previous time been projected. Indeed, had the East India Company at first formed the design of great conquests, it is probable they would never have succeeded in achieving them. One important cause of their territorial extensions has been, that they were uncontemplated, and often unforeseen. The next acquisition was that of the Twenty-four Pergunnahs, which were obtained from the Imperial Government in 1759. That transaction it will be necessary now to explain.

¹ Captain Thornton: *Summary History*, 21.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TWENTY-FOUR PERGUNNAHS.

THE Afghan marauders who had occupied Delhi, did not maintain the whole of their conquest; but allowed the King of Delhi still to enjoy his title, with the shrunken relics of his power. The Shahzadah, or eldest son of this monarch, raising a rebellion against his father, the English aided in suppressing it. This occurred in the early months of 1759. The Mogul, to reward such a grateful service—he stood sorely in need of friends—granted the Twenty-four Pergunnahs as a jaghire to Lord Clive. The date of this cession has been misrepresented by historians as 1757, when it would appear an act of assumption.¹ It took place in

¹ Mill: History of India, iii., 368.

1759, towards the close of the year—that is about the month of September,¹ expressly as a mark of favour for the eminent services Clive had rendered to the government of Delhi.² In 1775, it reverted to the Company.³ None, therefore, can object to this acquisition that it was an example of rapacity, or an instance of unjust aggression on the rights of the native princes. The favour they had acquired they maintained by additional services. The Shahzadah again rose against his father, was again defeated by the English, and prevented from further rebellion.⁴

The Twenty-four Pergunnahs form a district to the south of Calcutta, on the east bank of the river Hooghly, and famous for its multitude of Hindu schools, where law, metaphysics, and grammar, are taught. The territory has steadily improved in its tillage, its population, and its commerce. Lands which lay waste in former years, are now under cultivation, and an aspect of prosperity has succeeded that of desolation.⁵

¹ Auber: British Power in India, i., 75.

² Malcolm: Life of Clive, ii., 187.

³ Walter Hamilton: Hindustan, i., 143.

⁴ Wilson: Notes, iii., 288.

⁵ Hamilton: Hindustan, i., 143.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EMPEROR OF DELHI ENTHRONED.

CIVIL war continued to rage in the seat of empire. The King was, in 1761, assassinated by the hand of his Vizier, and the Shahzadah succeeded to the title of Great Mogul, but without the power to assert his authority. He at once threw himself upon the generosity of the English, placed himself in their hands, without stipulating for more than his personal safety, and waited for their decision. Meanwhile, the Afghans, before retiring from Delhi, declared the Shahzadah King; the Mahrattas, whose power had been shattered by blows without and shaken by dissensions within, made no opposition, and the Nawab of Oude—lord of a territory spreading from the banks of the Caramnassa, nearly as far as the

imperial city—marched to Benares to meet the King, and escort him to his capital.¹ The Bengal Council, however, recognised the truth of his avowal, that their arms could alone carry him triumphantly into his palace, under the gorgeous canopies which had hung over Jehanghire, Aurungzebe, and the other mighty sovereigns of his race. They feared to send their forces so far as Delhi; but as their interests, as well as their honour, were involved in the transaction, they obeyed the instructions of their Directors at home to establish the Shahzadah under his title—Shah Alum, in the imperial city, if possible, at a moderate expense.²

The Nawab of Oude, one of the most powerful chiefs, under nominal subjection to his government, who had at once declared in his favour, was made Vizier, and contributed to place him on the baseless throne of Delhi, amid the faded pomp and pale reflection of that lustre which once shone around the most splendid monarchy of Asia. The Mogul promised formally to confirm the Company's rights in Bengal, and freely offered them the dewanee, or revenue administra-

¹ Auber: British Power in India, i., 80.

² Letter to Bengal, 1761.

tion of the province, which they repeatedly rejected,¹ declaring they desired to make no further acquisitions, but to enjoy in peace what they already possessed.²

¹ Mill : British India, iii., 315.

² Auber : British Power in India, i., 83.

CHAPTER XIII.**ACQUISITION OF BENGAL.**

AT this time the Nawab of Bengal was assailed by the rapacity of some among those disreputable ministers of the Company in India, whose conduct has been ignorantly or maliciously confounded with the general policy of the British Government. He resisted it, and, so far from being blamed, was highly applauded by the Directors in England,¹ who desired to countenance no unjustifiable proceedings. The public trade of the Company was fairly conducted; but in their private traffic, several individuals attempted to exaggerate the privileges granted in the Imperial firman. They were, however, prohibited by the superior authority from developing a

¹ Letter to Bengal, May, 1763.

plan which no writer endeavours to palliate. The natives, then, taking advantage of this check, committed every kind of injury to the English trade.¹ Complaints were made to the Nawab. He treated them with contempt, applied for aid to the Emperor and the Nawab of Oude, seized five hundred stand of arms, demanded the evacuation of Patna, attacked the members of the deputation, killed many, imprisoned the rest, and then declared war upon the Company.² It broke out. All alliance with him was necessarily at an end. In every treaty there are two parties, and a deliberate violation of faith by one remits the obligation of the other. Meer Jaffir Khan, who had remained under the protection of the English at Calcutta, was again proclaimed to the Musnud of Bengal. The Directors at home were not pleased with this proceeding,³ but Kossim Ali Khan extinguished the hope of a return to peace with him. He committed a horrible massacre upon a number of our countrymen who were in his power, and thus sealed his declaration of war by one of those bloody acts to which the malignity of an Indian prince has so fre-

¹ Mill: British India, iii., 335.

² Auber: British Power in India, i., 87.

³ Letter to Bengal, 1762.

quently resorted. A German named Sumroo was the instrument of this crime.

The Mogul probably desired not to come into collision with the English. But they could not know his secret inclinations. They could only know of his acts, and he was the tool of his Wuzeer. The power that could once wield that mass of empire was gone. Decay was in its heart at Delhi, and the King moved in obedience to the will of his profligate minister. They offered their united arms against Kossim Ali Khan. The Company declined their aid, desiring only they would secure him if he fled into their dominions. Shujah-Dowlah, the Nawab of Oude, then changed his policy, and received the flying criminal. Had Kossim been a political refugee escaping from the penalty which attaches to rebellion; had he been simply a defeated prince driven from his throne, who sought a hiding-place within the frontier of Oude, we should have applauded the hospitable chivalry which refused to yield him up, and surrounded him with a sanctuary of arms. But he was a villain and murderer; a traitor also, having first massacred in cold blood a number of Englishmen, fled into the territories of a prince who exulted in his crime, and made common cause with him against

the power he had wronged. Shujah-Dowlah was therefore an accomplice in the transaction. No terms could, of course, be accepted, while our enemy was his ally. The Emperor and his Wuzeer prevented further negotiations. They commenced hostilities. They marched to the banks of the Caramnassa, and attacked their former protector. Once more European skill prevailed against a barbarous multitude. The memorable field of Buxar gave a new flush to the rising glories of the British arms in Asia, and the Great Mogul, with his Wuzeer, laid offers of peace at the feet of that association of merchants which had so lately come to his ancestor on a mission of supplication.¹

The Company offered to accept such terms as would punish the murderer Sumroo, and indemnify them for their losses. Shujah-Dowlah refused them, and the King, who had, according to his own declaration, been a virtual slave to the Wuzeer, came over to the English camp.² He agreed to their proposition to deliver up Sumroo, and promised to cede the country as far as Benares, if they would reduce to his authority the Nawab of Oude. That chief was brought

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, ii., 360.

² Mill : iii., 35

to submission, and agreed to pay the expenses of the war. The King, grateful for deliverance from an odious coercion, granted the Company the perpetual dewanee of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa—being authority for the collection and disbursement of its revenues, and the administration of justice.¹ They agreed to pay him yearly a stipulated tribute, while, with the exception of a small district reserved to the King, they restored to Shujah-Dowlah all his territories. Virtually he lost nothing, while Shah Alum received from the Company an income greater than he had ever before enjoyed.² In Bengal the old Nawab was dead, and a child succeeded to his title. They left him, nevertheless, the style and parade of royalty, and thus their empire was deeply founded in India. Thenceforward, indeed, and virtually from the battle of Plassy, the chronicle of events in Bengal is the history of British ascendancy.³ Up to this period, however, they had power over the prince, not over the people. Now, by a happy revolution, both came under their sway, and the natives at least found a blessing in the result. They had long

¹ Thornton : State and Prospects of India, 23.

² Auber : British Power in India, i., 145.

³ Stewart : History of Bengal, 534.

been accustomed to change—they were thoroughly reconciled with conquest, and all they could desire was that the re-occupation—if we consent to use that term—should be permanent. National independence, as a sentiment, if it was ever known to them, had long been quenched amid the flames of frequent war, and the endless succession of masters, by oppression perpetually enforced, and anarchy continually renewed. What, therefore, they required was a solid authority, with the strength and mercy of civilization, and under this they passed by the treaty of 1765. Long it will indeed be before this process of enlightening and polishing the people of Bengal, is complete. They must consent to be patient who calculate on changing the sentiments and habitudes of a whole nation; for, as Shirley Hibberd remarks, the conservative tendency among the lower classes, “is much more potent in vicious habits and degrading pursuits, than in those which tend to the elevation of humanity.”¹

¹ Shirley Hibberd : In his learned Illustrations of Porphyry.

CHAPTER XIV.

SPIRIT OF THE COMPANY'S POLICY.

It served the purpose of declaimers during a period when the English public was excited concerning the politics of India, to stigmatise these great transactions as the sale of prince to prince, as a struggle between ambition and avarice, in which he who wore the heaviest purse was victor. We can now afford, however, to neglect and despise the denunciation of the party orators, whose names are now buried in oblivion together with their charges. We may admire without being moved by the asperities of the orator,¹ whose superb eloquence and exaggerated rhetoric were at least as often employed in misrepresenting the truth as in displaying it. It is needless, I think, to search

¹ Burke: Speeches on the Affairs of India.

beneath his conduct for any other motive than the motive he professed. He studied India much; his heart yearned for her wrongs; he desired to see her dusky millions exalted to the level of civilized humanity: but the lights he possessed did not allow him to see through the gloom of ten thousand miles, to divide true statements from false, or to realise the magnitude of the difficulties which beset his countrymen in the East. Yet it is scarcely possible to imagine that he was not animated by an intense hatred of the Company. His invective against it was not the condemnation of a mind convinced by judicial inquiry. Besides this, the style of his oratory was always inclined to exaggeration. It could not rise high without becoming a tempest, and, once at that elevation, he measured none of his terms, but fled after his kindled fancy, without temper or precaution. The passion of his language, luxuriantly ornate, carried him often beyond his theme, and even sometimes, I make bold to say, to that point where the line between the sublime and the ridiculous is marked only by a dim, indefinite horizon. They who are familiar with his speeches will recognise the passages to which allusion is made.

The English had now reached a stage in the pro-

gress of their struggling commerce when they must allow their servants to extend, or their enemies to annihilate, their empire. They possessed too much or too little. It is difficult to imagine the tone of a history which should have chronicled their abdication of India. Language does not afford terms to characterise such imbecility. If they remained, it was their duty to protect themselves, and the population now united to them in the relation of subjects to rulers. The causes of war began to be developed. The aid they at first lent to the Eastern powers it would have been dangerous, if not impossible, to withhold.¹ So valuable was it to these princes, that it often prevented their utter destruction. But the reward was of another kind. They who had so many causes of gratitude to them became the aggressors, in continual contests.² It was not to be expected from human nature, and it was not to be desired, that princes who had brought the English into long, sanguinary, and expensive wars, should be allowed to escape without atonement for their treachery, or guarantee for their future faith. The Company was bound to honour with the native rulers; but it

¹ Malcolm: Political History of India.

² Sutherland: Historical Sketches of the Princes of India, 5.

was bound also to England, and this nation would have beheld with little favour a scheme for burdening them with the cost of expensive enterprises, in order that the aggressors in Asia, should retain the original limits of their empire. We had also been, it is true, pledged to obey the Mogul, but the order of these relations had been reversed. All he enjoyed he now owed to the merchants who formerly laid a petition at the foot of his ancestor's throne. At any rate, our obedience was to be measured by the standard of his just authority. No man owes allegiance to the caprice of a despot, otherwise he may be called upon to rebel against his own nature.

A mighty change no doubt resulted in the condition of India. All governments, however, were originally founded in revolution. It is the first step in empire. The next is the establishment of laws, the institution of order, and a provision for the people's happiness. In Bengal that process took place. The interests of its old governors were liberally provided for, and the dawn of peace for the first time broke over the province. No revolution in the social affairs of any state was ever so great or so happy. Under the native dynasty no form of suffering was unknown. Villany of every kind, in contempt

of law, religion and justice, was practised in all parts, by every man in authority, from the petty village officer, to the inheritor of the royal Musnud, and men, like beasts in the forest, depended alone on the strength of their arms.¹ Speedily the armed bands which had subsisted on war and plunder, forsook their hereditary habits, and cultivated some peaceful occupation. Their descendants are harmless peasants.² If, then, conquest of India was just according to the law of nations, the face of the country, in the charms of its contrast with the desolation of the Imperial age, appeals to the law of nature, and British rule stands ready to be judged by its fruits.

¹ Dow: Decline of the Empire.

² Malcolm: Political History, 440.

CHAPTER XV.

ACQUISITION OF THE NORTHERN CIRCARS.

INSTALLED in the High-Stewardship of Bengal, the East India Company, under its humble title of a trading association, exercised imperial authority. As in the growth, so in the character of its power, the ordinary course of things was reversed. In most official systems the style is above the function ; in India, the contrary was true.¹ Petty appellations covered the dignity of magistrates and administrators, influencing the affairs and controlling the revenues of countries once included in the paramount monarchy of Asia. The fabulous splendour of the Mogul Court was already vanishing among the shadows of tradition, and the broken pride of the inde-

¹ Burke: Speech on the Charge against Hastings, xiii., 35.

pendent Subahdars, who had built their kingdoms on the ruins of his fallen power, made way for the writers and merchants who now succeeded to that superb inheritance. Five eras of Indian history had passed away. The Hindus had been followed by the Muslims, and a long dynasty of Arabian potentates sat on the banks of the Ganges. The Tartars, under Tamerlane, swept her plains from west to east. Then arose the empire of Akbar; then in the revolutions of her destiny, the mighty state was rent into separate principalities, and lastly, upon these was erected the grand structure that forms the crown and capital of a dominion which has a province in every quarter of the globe—building cities at once under the Frozen Serpent and the Southern Cross.

The sudden rise and rapid progress of British dominion in the East are among the most remarkable episodes of modern history. From the victories of Plassy and Buxar, it dilated under the hands of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings, of Cornwallis, Wellesley, and their successors, until its proportions became gigantic. Children scarcely grew to men, before the small seminal principle introduced at that period had shot up into a tree which overshadowed the richest pro-

vinces of Asia. From factories to cities, from cities to kingdoms, the circle of conquest widened as by the influence of some irresistible destiny. It was the genius of merchants with the genius of soldiers, disciplined by the genius of the politician, which built up that edifice. It flourished amid wars and convulsion, and the endless distractions of native states served only to promote its strength and increase its stature.¹ It was deeply involved, indeed, in the complications of their affairs, and a narrative of political romance is afforded by the history of the relations which sprang up between the merchant governors and their old rivals in the peninsula. These it is impossible here to follow in detail. It is not strictly my intention to indicate the causes of wars, unless those wars were followed immediately or indirectly by annexation; for it is a sufficient duty to pursue, from stage to stage of their victorious career, the actual architects of our British Indian Empire.

The next acquisition of territory was that of the Northern Circars, forming an important territory on the western shores of the Bay of Bengal, with a coast line of four hundred and seventy

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, i., 19.

miles, and an area of about seventeen thousand. About half of the surface is cultivable, the tilled lands yielding usually two heavy crops of grain in the year. A population of about three millions, almost wholly Hindu, is engaged in the various branches of industry and trade, and the country is rapidly assuming many features of civilization. The Northern Circars had in 1757 been granted to the French;¹ but during the renewed war in the Carnatic were wrested from them, and restored by the English to the native princes. This was one in a series of triumphs in which the arms of the Company displayed their lustre. Their great European rival was prostrated, though not expelled, or disheartened from his favourite hope. They occupied then a situation of superior glory in Asia. They had far outrun their ambition. They saw themselves on a loftier eminence than ever they had hoped or desired to reach. When new struggles took place in the dominions of Mohammed Ali, they entered on them without any design of conquest. So much, indeed, is admitted by the most cynical of historians.² To see the province ruled by a master who should owe them gratitude and repay

¹ Hamilton : Hindustan, ii., 66.

² Mill : British India, iii., 376.

it with favour, was the only prospect which had reconciled them to the field of battle. Fortune quickly changed the colour of affairs: they could not control the element which floated them forward; their victory placed them in a new position. Their ally was not only triumphant by their aid, but tributary to their power. The Carnatic was his territory, but they were his masters. His weakness had devolved on them the whole burden of the war, though his rapacity sought to reap the sole advantage of it. All he had gained was by their aid; all he could hold was by their assistance; all he could hope was from their generosity. In the embroilments, however, which arose between him and the English, it is impossible to deny that among many of the Company's servants a rapacious, unprincipled spirit prevailed, which has ignorantly or maliciously been presented as a general example of British policy in the East.

The Northern Circars were valuable as a possession to any power holding the commercial supremacy of the Coromandel coast. This was at once apparent to the English. It became to them an object of no little consequence. By the fortune of war, the Circars had fallen into their hands, and they might have retained them in

satisfaction of their claims on the treasury of the Carnatic; their cession also had been offered by the Nizam or Subahdar of the Deccan.¹ However, as the Mahrattas, now extending their power, viewed with a jealous eye the progress of British conquest, the Council of Madras proposed to rent the territory from the Nawab, who was too solicitous to derive new advantages from his allies to hesitate, when he might buy so cheaply the aid of their triumphant arms.²

At this period, however, events had laid the King of Mogul under overwhelming obligations to the English, whose power alone upheld him on the ancient but decaying throne of Delhi. He granted them, upon application, a firman, by which they became, without conquest, lawful possessors of the Northern Circars.³ Like the rest of India, this tract had been held by Rajahs and Polygars, who farmed the revenue, and exercised a sort of independent authority within the limits of their states. The Imperial firman released them from tribute to the Subahdar of the Deccan, as well as to the Nawab of the Carnatic, and transferred their allegiance to the

¹ Mill: *British India*, iii., 452.

² Auber: *British Power in India*, i., 209.

Mill: *British India*, iii., 452.

English. Since the success of the Company's arms, indeed, those powers had exercised little more than a nominal influence in the Northern Circars, and some new authority was called for to rescue them from the anarchy by which they were overwhelmed. The Imperial grant, conferring a legal right,¹ placed them at the disposal of our countrymen; and all that remained to confirm them in the territory, was annexation. The advantage of the acquisition was apparent. It would give them possession of all the coast from the mouths of the Ganges to the Coromandel settlements,² excepting the province of Orissa, which, though included in the British dewanee, was held by the warlike Mahrattas.³

When the English proceeded to take possession of their new acquisition, the Nizam, rebelling openly against the Imperial authority, pretended to feel exasperated at their acts,⁴ and prepared to make war upon them. Though entitled to enforce their privilege by arms, they preferred to negotiate peace, and agreed to rent from the Nizam, for an annual sum of nine lacs

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, ii., 456.

² Mill : British India, iii., 453.

³ Wilson : Notes, *ibid*.

⁴ Sutherland : Historical Sketch of the Princes of India, 82.

of rupees, the Circars of Rajamundry, Ellore, Mustephanegur, Chicacoole, and Murtezanegur ; while the Guntoo Circar was allotted to Bassalut Jung, the old Subahdar of the Deccan, who had been dethroned by his brother. It was, perhaps, an excess of delicacy or timidity, which induced the Company to offer such liberal terms ; but it may have been, at that juncture, wiser than the policy of war. One stipulation in the treaty was, however, imprudent. The English agreed to assist the Subahdar with a military force, whenever he should require it ; thus bringing on themselves the chance of dangerous and destructive wars, which might be equally profitless to themselves and ruinous to their allies.¹ This article of the treaty excited severe displeasure among the Court of Directors.² However, the territory was now included in their growing empire, and the Subahdar, with shrunken dominions, was left to exercise his versatile talent for treachery by intriguing with the enemies of his allies. His power, indeed, had otherwise diminished. The Nawab of the Carnatic, once his tributary, was now, by an Imperial firman,

¹ Mill : British India, iii., 455.

² Letter to Bengal, 1768. ¶

created his equal. It is insinuated by an historian,¹ as well as by an anonymous rhetorician,² and asserted by another,³ that Clive proposed to raise Mohammed Ali to the Subahdari of the Deccan, which he refused, exclaiming, “The Deccan is too great for me!” But it is far from probable that the ambitious prince, who had spent his life in a struggle for power, would have turned away from that alluring prospect.⁴ It is not in the East we often find the philosophy of Cincinnatus. Its princes seldom wearied in the pursuit of power. Sensual and gross as they were, the thirst for authority was little slaked in them by that gratification of the baser appetites, in which they habitually indulged. Voluptuousness, it is said, is unambitious; for, satisfied with itself, it desires no reputation, and is nowhere more happy than in the shade;⁵ but in India the slaves of sensuality were the most ardent devotees of ambition.

¹ Mill: *British India*, iii., 454.

² *History and Man. of E.I.C.*, 150.

³ Penhoen: *Empire Anglais*, ii., 458.

⁴ Wilson: *Notes*, iii., 454.

⁵ Montaigne: *Essais*, vii., 237.

CHAPTER XVI.

CAREER OF WARREN HASTINGS.

WE now arrive at the remarkable administration of Warren Hastings. It forms, perhaps, the most interesting episode of British Indian history. If this were a complete view of that history, the main details of his reign would necessarily be here investigated. The conflict between the Muslim Mohammed Reza Khan, and the Hindu Maharajah Nuncomar; the defeat of both by the Governor-General; the compact with Oude; and the desolation of Rohilcund; the rise of Sir Philip Francis—the probable author of the Letters of Junius—and the reciprocal descent of Hastings; the clashing of the military and the judicial swords; with the other events and individuals which distinguished that period, would claim a

full and just description. The most attached friend of the Company would not seek to shield from infamy the men and the actions which then disgraced the English name; but the most sensitive philanthropists and protectors of the Indian races, must have the candour to acknowledge the bewildering nature of the storm which encompassed Warren Hastings, and might have wrecked the British Indian Empire had any other than he been at the helm. The nefarious Rohilla war, the torture of the eunuchs at Lucknow, the treatment of the Princesses of Oude,—these are spots on the splendid fame of Hastings. But the hanging of Nuncomar—styled a murder in the bold declamation of the Governor-General's prosecutor at the bar of the House of Lords¹—the negotiation with Sir Elijah Impey, and the policy which changed the double form of government in Bengal, offered ground for a fair and successful defence. Superb diction and brilliant rhetoric have seldom been employed with more truth and force than in this task by a recent historian.²

It will be proper briefly to notice those transactions which do not strictly belong to this

¹ Burke: *Impeachment of Hastings*.

² Macaulay: *Essay on Hastings*.

inquiry, though they bear on the general conduct of our countrymen in India.

In 1772, Warren Hastings took his seat at the head of the Council in India. Bengal was then governed by a double machinery—a system ruling within a system—one concealing another. The English masters of the country were supreme; there was no authority which could oppose itself to their will. Nevertheless, they had not assumed the titles of sovereignty. They still paid tribute to the ancient Prince of Delhi, still employed his commissions, still used his seal, still minted coin in his name. His viceroy still sat in Bengal amid the pomp, and nothing but the pomp, of royalty. This plan opened broad avenues to abuse. It left a field for corrupt and greedy politicians to wring from the timid, crouching Bengalees the little increase of their labour. This Hastings determined to reform. He achieved his purpose, though he hung Nuncomar by the way, and few but men of the most heroic virtue placed in his position would not have raised the gallows as he did.

Already the revolution in Indian affairs was complete. One condition of things had succeeded to another. The Mogul monarchy was dissolved, and rival states—none subject in more

than name, and some entirely independent—divided the fragments of that great dominion.¹ Amid these the Presidency of Bengal stood eminent. It had been left for Warren Hastings to destroy the shadowy, and recognise the substantive power. His vigorous counsels at once gave form and durability to the rising structure.²

Dangers were multiplied around; the hostility of France placed our Indian possession in peril; the American war threatened to paralyze the heart of the empire; losses by sea and land encouraged every enemy, and cooled the attachment of many friends. In the midst of these events, which everywhere broke up the plans of statesmen, and confounded their judgment,³ the Governor-General ruled his own policy with a powerful and steady hand. Such a period was the peculiar element his genius required in which to develop itself. He rose at all times to the level of the circumstances which surrounded him; and if we condemn the unprincipled *abandon* of his policy, the mind cannot refuse to admire the superb ability which framed and maintained it in motion.

¹ Dow: Decline of the Empire.

² Gleig: Memoirs of Warren Hastings.

³ Heeren: European States and Colonies, ii., 99.

The tempest of war which then arose on the borders of our dominions, demanded all the vigour of the English councils to preserve peace and safety; while the requisitions of the Company at home for supplies of money pressed heavily on the resources of India. These were occasionally so urgent that, to obey them, and at the same time to follow the laws of political morality which they laid down for the guidance of their ministers, was all but impossible. They misconceived the character of the provinces they had acquired, and remembering alone the old tales of Oriental wealth, current in Europe from the remotest period, imagined they were drawing no more than the legitimate produce of their acquisitions. For the fancy of men, even politicians, still revelled in the visionary glories of an Indian kingdom. They imagined the sacred waves of the Ganges flowing round pagodas with golden globes, and domes bestarred with gems; of perfumed groves; of pearls sprinkled like sand on the beach; of rivers washing down an auriferous soil; of palaces glowing with all the gaudy magnificence of the East, with ivory thrones, canopies of cloth of gold, slaves whose dresses were the price of a crown, silver maces, shawls and carpets of Kashmere, and treasures overflowing with

star-pagodas, and newly minted mohurs, struck in innumerable thousands, to be lavished on the costliest indulgences of life. Such were the traditional dreams of Europe; and the traders of London, in the proper spirit of their vocation, desired to enjoy the wealth of their expanding and splendid realm. Of further blame they stand acquitted.¹ Warren Hastings, to preserve their favour, was not delicate in his choice of means, and thence accrued to the English name and to the East India Company, a deep disgrace, which they would have been spared, had their Governor-General been noble enough to sacrifice, for the sake of pure, high principle, the projects of his eager unscrupulous ambition. It is to be remembered, however, that in India many extortionate acts were committed in the name of the Company, in which they did not in the least participate.² A clumsy system of revenue opened wide avenues for peculation; but when, by the liberal genius of the Governor-General, a bold revolution had been effected, a new plan of financial organization was introduced, and many of these opportunities for fraud were closed.³

¹ Macaulay: *Essay on Warren Hastings*.

² Auber: *British Power in India*.

³ Dubois de Jancigny—Xavier Raymond: *L'Inde*.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SACRED CAPITAL OF INDIA.

WE now proceed to examine the train of circumstances which led to the acquisition of the city and district, and Zemindary of Benares. They form one of those episodes which furnished materials for the most uncompromising charges upon the character and conduct of Warren Hastings.¹

Among the territories included in the empire of the Great Mogul, before the invasion of Nadir Shah, was that of Benares, in the province of Allahabad, or City of God,—so named by the Emperor Akbar.² It is built in crescent shape, on a curve of the river Ganges; but though the

¹ Burke and Sheridan: Speeches on the Impeachment.

² Hamilton; Description of Hindustan, i., 306.

remains of an Arabian mosque overlook the temple and gardens of the native priests, few Mohammedans reside there; for the place is sacred as the capital of the ancient Indian creed. Siva himself, in a petrified form, with a million of images, consecrates the place where eight thousand houses are inhabited by Brahmins, who allow their own property to accumulate while they feast on the property of others. Originally built of gold, Benares is said to have degenerated into stone, for the sins of its people; yet it is still venerated as the gate to Paradise.

This sacred city of India, the Mecca of the Brahmin faith, and place of pilgrimage for all the learned and pious of the neighbouring regions, was held in extraordinary reverence, and prized among the dependencies of Delhi.¹ From the time of Aurungzebe it had formed an appanage to the Subah of Oude; its governor obtaining, indeed, honours from the Emperor, but never enjoying or exercising independent power.² Indeed, he was in subjection to the Nawab, and felt severely the force of his oppression.

In 1764, when war commenced between the

¹ Mill: British India, ii., 361.

² Wilson: Notes, *ibid.*

English and the Nawab of Oude, Bulwant Singh was Rajah of Benares, and offered his arms in alliance against his feudal superior. Ignorant of his position and of the politics of the country,¹ they received his overtures as those of an independent power, accepted his services, and placed themselves under obligations to him. He had, indeed, been once in hostilities with them, under the flag of the Subahdar. At the end of the war, having engaged to render him the benefit of protection, in return, they were bound to defend him against the vengeance of the Subahdar. That prince, however, on the death of Bulwant Singh, confirmed his son, Cheyte Singh, in the Rajahate of Benares, raising his tribute, however, to two lacs and a-half of rupees.² This clearly shows that the authority of Oude was competent to increase or lessen the amount of the contribution. When, therefore, the rights of the Subahdar over Benares were transferred to the Company, this right was indisputably included among them. Indeed, the influence exerted by the English in the Rajah's behalf, was no more than successful mediation; for the Subahdar claimed only to

¹ Historical Sketches of the Princes of India, 47.

² Mill: British India, iv., 363.

exercise his privilege according to the political laws of India.¹

In a former negotiation with the King of Delhi, the Company had ceded to him the districts of Corah and Allahabad; but only on condition of his continued independence. When he threw himself into the arms of the Mahrattas, broke his faith with the English, deceived and intrigued against them, and refused to accept their friendship, they, naturally enough, not only declined to remain his tributary, but resolved to resume possession of Corah and Allahabad.² It is scarcely fair to state simply that, on the plea of his being a tool in the hands of others, they determined to retract their concession to him.³ They occupied the districts, but offered on their part to restore him to his old position in them, if he would release them from tribute, and re-unite himself with their ally. He refused to modify his demands or to disengage himself from his dangerous participation in the plans of their enemies;⁴ and they consequently gave over to the Nawab of Oude Corah and Allahabad, for which he paid

¹ Wilson : Notes, iv., 362.

² Auber : British Power in India, i., 383.

³ Macaulay : Essay on Hastings, 21.

⁴ Auber : British Power in India, i., 394.

a large sum, and resigned to the Company his rights over the city and district of Benares. The Rajah then entered, with the English, into the relation of a subject to a sovereign. They granted him liberal privileges, arranged his tribute,¹ but never recognised him otherwise than as a subordinate—a delegate—a receiver of rents—a civil and commercial judge; nor did they bind themselves in any manner to exempt the Rajah from further demands, should the necessity of their exchequer require them.² Neither could they be bound by any existing compact; for this document of 1776, distinctly declared all former ones null and void.³

Whether or not the financial system of the Company, or of Warren Hastings in particular, was based on the most enlightened views of policy, it is not in the purpose of the present essay to inquire. Such as their system was, they had a right to regulate the contributions of every territory whose zemindary had been confided to them. There was no treaty to the contrary with the Rajah; indeed, there was no treaty at all. It was nothing but a grant or patent from

¹ Mill: British India, iv., 362.

² Wilson: Notes, *ibid.*

³ Minutes of Evidence, 60.

a superior to an inferior, naming, for the time, a sum as tribute, but containing no engagement that the amount would never be altered. Indeed, the conduct and disposition of Cheyte Singh deprived him of a claim to that consideration which he might otherwise have expected. It is certain that he was conspiring against the Company's power, though historians may choose to forget this fact, and describe all the Rajah's offence as a desire to escape from heavy burdens of taxation.¹ The contrary is proved by the historical records of the time, which show him to have concerted plans of rebellion to involve the English in war.²

When Warren Hastings proceeded to enforce his demands—and some of those, it is to be confessed, were inconsiderate in a high degree—Cheyte Singh rebelled against their authority.³ To allow his opposition to prevail would have been a total neglect of statesmanship; to follow the policy which brought destruction on the mighty mass of the Delhi Empire—to relax the reins of authority—to loosen the parts of the rising fabric of British power, and leave it, though half-completed, a

¹ Mill : British India, iv., 375.

² Wilson : Notes, iv., 375.

³ Historical Sketch of the Princes of India, 48.

ruin, without even the dignified aspect of antiquity—Warren Hastings was not the politician to adopt that course; he left it for another ruler in a later age. The British arms were employed to bear down the insurrection of the Benares Rajah. Cheyte Singh fled the province, and it fell under English rule. They preferred, however, to continue one of his family in the titles of power—though the government of the sacred city and its neighbouring lands was thenceforward their own.¹

In this transaction it is necessary to separate from the general scheme of Warren Hastings' policy some of the details which characterised it. To applaud or condemn them all without this attempt at discrimination, would be equally unwise and unjust. It may, however, I believe, be laid down that the acquisition of the dewanee of Bengal was fairly made; that the relations between the Company, Shah Alum, and Asaph-a-Dowlah, were regulated by the English with a regard to equity; that, in their negotiation with the Subahdar of Oude, all good faith was employed; that the Rajahate of Benares fell under their authority, as rightfully as Scotland or Ireland

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, iii., 321.

fell under the authority of England; that it was perfectly competent for the Governor-General, without a flagitious breach of honour, to impose upon him an increase of tribute, and that, in refusing to pay it, he played the part of a rebel. They, therefore, who uphold the authority of established governments, must concede that the acquisition of Benares violated no article in the law of nations, nor, as we think, in the law of nature, which is that of simple justice. At the same time, some of the acts acknowledged by the Governor-General¹ deserve the reprobation of posterity, though the general line of British policy lay in the course of honour. Had the Rajah of Benares been faithful in his viceroyalty; had he refrained from conspiring against the English; had he not discovered his rebellious projects, we might more severely have condemned the rapacity which made claims so heavy upon him. As it was, he was harshly treated as an enemy, the more formidable, because insidious and concealed. His territory was lost to him partly through his own misconduct, partly through the stern demands of Warren Hastings. The advantage to its people was incredible, while that to

¹ Memoirs on the Affairs of India.

the Company was far inferior to what might have been anticipated from the reported treasures piled up by piety or ostentation in the temples and palaces of the sacred city. They had indeed been lavished by the pilgrims, who congregated there from all parts of India; but a swarm of indolent priests was perpetually on the spot to consume them.¹

We consider this as the virtual conquest of Benares, notwithstanding that the actual annexation of the territory to the Company's dominions was not effected until 1794. An agreement was then concluded, by which the nominal Rajah surrendered his shadow of privilege, retired to live in a sumptuous palace upon a noble estate, and gave up the appearance, as he had never enjoyed the reality, of power.²

¹ On the hereditary wisdom and characteristic rapacity of the Brahmin priesthood, see Shirley Hibberd's able commentaries on Porphyry. There is considerable similitude between the genius of the Papal Church and that of the Brahminical idolatry.

² Historical Sketch of the Princes of India, 48.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RISE OF THE MAHRATTA POWER—SALSETTE.

OUR next inquiry turns towards the acquisition of Salsette, an island connected with Bombay by an artificial isthmus. It formerly belonged to the Mogul province of Aurungabad,¹ but had now fallen into the possession of the Mahrattas.

That formidable people, which had sprung up amid the valleys of a wild range extending from Guzerat to Canara, extending its language over an immense range of country,² had crossed the boundaries of the Mogul Empire, and made themselves a home in regions far more rich and abundant than the original cradle of their race.

¹ Hamilton : Hindustan, ii., 170.

² Wilks : Historical Sketches, 6.

Freebooters at first, they became conquerors in turn; armed bands of marauders changed into invading hosts. They built mighty fortresses on impregnable rocks, became lords of towns uncounted, with thousands of villages scattered amid the rice fields and jungles below their native mountains, and erected splendid trophies beyond the Ganges; so that throughout India the fame of that Mahratta cavalry was spread further even than the renown of the British arms.¹ They had encountered the army of Aurungzebe; they had wrung concessions from the great Hyder Ali; Delhi had opened its gates to them, and still preserving their marauding character, they made war against the white conquerors of Bengal.

The narrative of these triumphs is one of splendid romance; but it is now only necessary to fix some points of their career. Having risen from a tribe into a nation, they challenged the Mogul to war, by the display of an immense army ready to pour down on the provinces subject to him.² They forced from him a part of the Deccan.³ Guzerat and Malwa were reduced

¹ See Duff: *Mahratta History*.

² Scott : *Operations of Aurungzebe*, 53.

³ Mill: *British India*, ii., 440.

by them. They could never rest; but incessantly invaded the contiguous countries, retreating as their enemy advanced, advancing as he retreated, plundering and firing everywhere, and sweeping the whole produce of the land into their flying camps. More concessions were extorted from the Imperial Government; but their ambition increased with their success, until they attempted the subjugation of the whole of Hindustan. In the Abdallees of Afghanistan, however, they encountered a powerful enemy; for after one victory their army was cut to pieces on the bloody plains of Paniput—where two mighty adventurers struggling for the universal dominion of India, opened a way for a third, which was rapidly growing towards supremacy.¹

They then turned their arms against Hyder Ali, who, himself an adventurer of the humblest descent, was rivalling them in the devastation of India. Next they prepared to conquer Bengal, obtained Baramahl from the Mysore chief, levelled their spears against the Rohilla horse, wasted the eastern borders of the Ganges, marched in triumph through the gates of Delhi, and boldly challenged a shock with the British power.²

¹ Duff: *Mahratta History*, ii., 136.

² Mill: *British India*, ii. 567.

It was frequently the policy of the English, when engaged in hostilities with any power, to embrace the cause of some individual expelled by a usurper from his throne. In the course of such a transaction, they were led to the acquisition of Salsette. The Mahrattas had devastated the borders of the Carnatic, while the English and their native ally looked calmly on.¹ When, at length, they were compelled to seek means of self-defence against these formidable hordes, it was by means of alliance with Ragobah, a Mahratta chief who had succeeded to the government of Poonah, but was assailed by a revolution. The question of prescriptive right entered very little into the transaction. Power was the ruler's warrant. Ragobah, though victorious against his enemies, found himself too weak to support his position, and applied to the Company for aid. They listened to the proposal, but required to be secured the expenses of the assistance they lent.² They had previously contemplated the purchase of Bassein and Salsette from Mahderas, the predecessor of Ragobah, but never completed the negotiation.³ Possession of the latter place had

¹ Auber : British Power in India, i., 507.

² Mill : British India, iii., 683.

³ Auber : British Power in India, i., 334.

always been eagerly desired, for it was an island with a population of fifty thousand, commanding the approach to Bombay harbour.¹ Now, therefore, when intelligence arrived that the Portuguese meditated an attempt to recover it among other of their lost possessions, this wish became still more earnest. Candour requires us to confess that more eagerness than respect to the rights of Ragobah was displayed by the Company in this affair. That chief was long averse to make the cession which was demanded in consideration of the aid of English troops ; on the other hand, it is clear that, as the Portuguese were making the most active preparations to attack Bassein and Salsette, either Ragobah's forces or the Company's must be employed as a means of self-defence,² to prevent them falling into their hands.

Still, the consent of their ally should have been obtained before the English proceeded to occupy one of the possessions to which he laid claim, and to which, by their adoption of his cause, they recognised his right. These scruples, however, did not prevail. Salsette and Bassein

¹ Hamilton : ii., 170.

² Mill—Penhoen—Auber—Wilson, iii., 606.

were seized.¹ Their inhabitants manifested a strong desire to yield them up to the Company,² and beyond one fort, which required a storm, no resistance was made. It was, meanwhile, represented to the chief, that this was simply a measure of precaution, as no intention existed of holding the places in opposition to his will. He appeared to be satisfied with the explanation, and offered large cessions of territory in other quarters. The Company, however, preferred Salsette and Bassein, and at length Ragobah agreed, yielding them up by treaty in March, 1775.³ His position, indeed, was such that the withdrawal of the English friendship would have left him without a hope of the throne he aspired to regain. Consequently, when a train of European artillery and a body of European infantry ranged themselves in the ranks of his small army, he rested on an ally whose aid was well worth the sacrifice he made to preserve it.⁴ Bassein was afterwards relinquished, while Salsette was retained conditionally.⁵

¹ Fifth Report, p. 69.

² Auber : British Power, i., 505.

³ Mill : British India, iii., 608.

⁴ Forbes : Oriental Memoirs, ii., 32.

⁵ Wilson, iii., 619.

A revolution in Poonah at length took place in favour of Ragobah, who was, throughout, carried forward to success by the assistance of the British forces. The accounts which history affords us of the conflicting claims to power among the chiefs of the Mahratta race do not enable us to fix justice on the pretensions of any one man. Perhaps the only philosophical view of the Poonah war of succession is to regard it as a struggle between adventurers striving to gain the right of power, each endeavouring to arm his cause with a fictitious legitimacy. The dissolution of the Mogul Empire had opened a wide battle field for such belligerents. The root of authority was torn up; its scattered branches took root; and it was impossible any longer to make reference to Delhi for judgment on the claims of inferior powers.¹ The Mahrattas themselves had carried fire and sword through the old provinces of that colossal, but fallen monarchy, and the gates of the imperial city herself had opened at the challenge of their war-drums. In their espousal of Ragobah's cause, therefore, the English chose merely a line of policy, the wisest perhaps they could have

¹ Macaulay : *Essay on Hastings.*

selected, as he was inclined to be friendly, and their enemies were his. All we can possibly condemn in the transaction is the capture of Salsette, without permission from its recognised master, and the manner in which the cession was insisted upon.¹

¹ Hamilton : *Hindustan*, ii., 172.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE NORTHERN CIRCARS.

FOLLOWING the chronological course of British acquisitions in India—from which, however, it may be impossible not occasionally to deviate—we return to the Northern Circars. Four of them had been acquired by treaty in 1766,¹ while the Guntoo Circar was assigned as a Jaghire to Bassalut Jung, brother of Nizam Ali, during his life, or rather as long as he should remain a faithful subject.² None of the territories, indeed, had been taken under the Company's direct management until 1769, when provincial chiefs and councils were established; a mode of administration which was continued

¹ Treaty of Hyderabad, 1766.

² Hist. and Man. of E.I.C., 151—Treaties, 364.

until 1794.¹ Strict injunctions on these points were communicated by the Company's Directors.² In 1779, the cession of the Guntoo Circar was procured from Bassalut Jung by treaty, but restored to the Bengal Government, which, though virtually its possessor, did not actually assume the administration until after a considerable interval of time. Indeed, it continued with the most moderate disposition to rent the country of the Nizam, though in 1803, Secundah Jah, in consideration of the friendship of the Company, made a voluntary offer to relinquish his allotment of the revenue. The proposal was refused.³

In process of time, however, this acknowledgment of the native sovereign's authority virtually changed from a tribute into a pension. So must it be where the recipient enjoys an annual disbursement by no other tenure than that of the donor's generosity, or desire of public reputation, for the chief possessed no means of assuring to himself the payments which the Company chose to make.

¹ Hamilton: Hindustan, ii., 66.

² Letter to Bengal, March, 1768.

³ Hamilton, ii., 66. See also Fifth Report, Grant, &c.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CARNATIC AND THE DECCAN.

ALTHOUGH the purpose of this work is confined to an explanatory view of the causes which led to actual acquisitions of territory by the East India Company, and, although I have intentionally avoided the attempt to embrace the whole course of British Indian history, it is necessary to lay down the rough outlines, in order to comprehend the relations which sprang up between our countrymen and the native powers.

In the Carnatic, after the prostration of the French power, relations of the most complicated kind continued to increase between the Company and the Nawab Mohammed Ali. Difficulties beset the English. They were in a new position.¹ They

¹ Wilson: Notes, iii., 377.

were governors *de facto*, while a native prince was governor *de jure*, though he considered himself absolute master, and looked on his allies only as servants, who had meritoriously exerted themselves in his cause. In reality, however, the Company had, as it was not disposed to forget, accepted the whole burden of the war which placed him on his throne. They had conquered the country for him, and, now that they had installed him in authority, their vigour and wisdom alone could uphold him in the position which had been the pinnacle of his aspiring hope.¹ Each, therefore, feeling the strength of claims which the other was not contented to recognise, dissatisfaction sprang up as a natural consequence. A solid compact should previously have been made. As it was, there was an open ground for misunderstanding. During the contest in the cause of the Nawab, the English never doubted that his gratitude would be ready to acknowledge the value of their services, and Mohammed Ali, while his fortune still trembled in the scale, never measured the liberality of his professions.² Promises are cheap to princes. When the period for settlement arrived, it was

¹ Mill : British India, iii., 377.

² Penhoen : Empire Anglais, ii., 368.

not easy to define its terms. This ambiguity paved the way for many equivocal proceedings among the servants of the Company,¹ which, whether intentionally or otherwise, have been identified with the general policy of that association.² Their defence is by no means implied in a vindication of British Conquests in India, nor would any government that ever existed on the earth, find grace with the honest historian, which would claim an acquittal for every vicarious minister, great or mean, to whom it delegated a share of its authority.

Arrangements were, nevertheless, gradually effected with the Nawab of the Carnatic. Pacific relations were also established with the Subahdar of the Deccan, who lay under heavy obligations to the British merchants. The treaty with him, which was signed in reference to the Northern Circars, hastened the Company into a long course of war. It engaged them to assist him with arms, if necessary, against the enemies of his power.² In 1760, he claimed the fulfilment of this article in the convention. Hyder Ali, Sovereign of the Mysore, was on the borders of the region, and great dangers appeared to rise

¹ Sir John Lindsay: *Narrative.*

² Edward Thornton: *State and Prospects of India*, 23.

up at the apparition of his terrible standard.¹ But that able, ambitious chief, crafty in the council as he was clever in the field, succeeded in drawing the Subahdar from his engagements, and seduced him from his allegiance to the Company. The object of the allies was then displayed. It was no other than to extinguish the British power throughout the south of India. But the vigour of the merchants' councils, and the force of their arms, defeated this combination; and the Subahdar, with Oriental scorn of faith and honour, again proclaimed himself a friend to the English. Hyder Ali, however, refused to pause in his operations. He poured a host of marauders on the wasted plains of the Carnatic; lit it up with flames, ravaged it with all the ferocity of an Asiatic conqueror, and left a long-enduring monument of his revenge. Negotiations at length concluded the war, and the desolator retired.

A reciprocal restitution of conquered territory was the basis of this convention.²

Auber. British Power in India, i., 115.

² Mill: British India, iii., 479.

CHAPTER XXI.

INVASION OF ROHILCUND.

HITHERTO the arms of the East India Company had been employed, at least in honourable enterprises. If every campaign was not exquisitely politic, there was no blot on the reputation of the country under whose flag it was carried on. During the reign of Warren Hastings, however, a war broke out, which, in its origin, in its conduct, and in its results, sullied the national character with a stain, only rendered deeper by the audacity of the defence which the advocate of Warren Hastings set up for it in Parliament and in the press.¹ The brilliant rhetorical powers of the Governor-General himself could not throw a veil over the atrocity of this transaction.² It

¹ Major Scott : *Apology for Warren Hastings*.

² Warren Hastings ; *Reply to the Charge*.

was, and it will remain, infamous in the sight of men, whether they be or be not politicians. The narrative of the Rohilla war fills the darkest page in British Indian history.

At a period beyond the reach of strict historical inquiry, there is reason to believe that a warlike nation, dwelling beyond the Hyphasis and the Hydaspes, came up over the great mountain ridge of India, to impose their authority on the original inhabitants of the plains. Conspicuous amid the tide of soldiers which poured over that mighty chain in the direction of the rising sun, were gallant Rohilla bands, whose swords and spears flashed always foremost in the armies of the Great Mogul. They were rewarded with large tracts of land, held by a feudal tenure, in that fruitful plain watered by the Ramgunga, which bears the melted snows of Kumaon to swell the sacred stream of the Ganges. The political and military earthquake, which shattered to fragments the great inheritance of empire bequeathed by Aurungzebe, left the valiant, warlike, and comparatively polished Rohillas, independent in their fertile possessions. They flourished on the borders of their picturesque river, and a slight exaggeration of rhetoric might draw a romantic picture of the “golden days when the

Afghan princes ruled in the vale of Rohilcund."¹ When Warren Hastings was administering the affairs of British India, the Directors at home, through ignorance of the real situation of affairs in that region, pressed him urgently for remittances of money. Unscrupulous as he was, he preferred to gain their favour by dishonesty, than preserve his own honour and the honour of his country by a faithful adherence to the laws of political ethics and of humanity. When, therefore, Sujah-a-Dowlah, Nawab of Oude, who had long gloated over the idea of adding to his possessions,—already extensive as they were,—the rich province of the Rohillas, offered a liberal reward for the aid of some British troops, Warren Hastings consented readily to the nefarious bargain.² There was but one army in India against which the valiant cavalry of Rohilcund could not stand.³ The convention was made, and a brave, liberal, independent people was sold to ruin by an English Governor-General, for the sum of four hundred thousand pounds sterling! The race has been stigmatised as treacherous;⁴

¹ Macaulay : *Essay on Warren Hastings*

² Gleig : *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*.

³ Macaulay : *Essay on Hastings*.

⁴ Charles Hamilton : *Rohillas*.

but where in the history of European or Asiatic war, was a more dishonourable action than this of Warren Hastings?

It is true that this transaction is not without its defenders. There is one popular writer who cannot see why it should be stigmatised as infamous.¹ There is also one historian² who has so often, with calm judiciality, tempered the representations of a partial witness³ who undertakes to apologise for the war. That all may form an independent opinion on the subject, it is right to show what his arguments are.

The Rohillas had been to the government of Oude dangerous and hostile neighbours. The two principalities had long been engaged in a struggle which would end only in the subjugation of one by the other. Policy the most obvious led the Nawab to desire their annihilation, not as a people, but as a power; and policy equally evident, urged the British Governor-General to aid him; for his friendship was not secure, and he was the only prince who could serve them as a counterpoise against the Mah-

¹ Gleig : *Memoir of Hastings*.

² Wilson : *Notes to Mill*.

³ Mill : *British India*.

rattas.¹ I do not deny that the name of the Mogul, and the swords of the Mahrattas might not even then have rallied against the English, a confederacy of enemies in all parts of India; but this does not appear to be sufficient justification of the Rohilla war. The Rohillas were the best-governed and the happiest people in the whole region. Fortunate in the mediocrity of their chiefs, they had not the ambition to conquer more territory than they already possessed; and their insignificance prevented them from being formidable to any neighbouring power.² Hostile they may have been to the Nawab; but it was not for the representative of Great Britain to become the rival of a German Hussarmonger, and hire out the swords which were to transfer a large population of brave and innocent people from the sway of a beneficent government to that of a bloody and rapacious despot.³

Accordingly, every writer of every class upon the history of India—with one or two exceptions—agrees to denounce the Rohilla war as an infamous sale of a noble people, by a civilized

¹ Wilson: Notes, v., 278.

² Verelst: Appendix, 28.

³ Mill: British India, iii., 574—Champion.

nation, to a barbarous, ungrateful, and reckless tyrant.

The able apologist for many of Warren Hastings' measures, condemns it without reserve.¹ The historian of British India finds in it full play for his favourite style of political criticism.² Some, indeed, have narrated the naked facts without a shade of comment.³ The French pour out upon it a flood of vigorous denunciation;⁴ even the mildest visit it with their severest censure.⁵ In this transaction the orator found a magnificent topic for his declamation;⁶ but no rhetoric of his could magnify the disgrace which thence accrued to the British name.

In other directions the British arms were carried against various enemies with more or less justification for the enterprise. Influence was established, if not actual dominion; so that at the period we have now reached, the British power had risen to be one of the principal in India. The Mahrattas, indeed, were their most

¹ Macaulay: *Essay on Warren Hastings*.

² Mill: *British India*, iii., 564.

³ Edward Thornton: *Historical Sketch*, 24.

⁴ Penhoen: *Empire Anglais*, iii., 64.

⁵ Dubois de Jancigny—Xavier Raymond: *L'Inde*, 418.

⁶ Burke: *Speeches against Hastings*.

formidable rivals, and others were to spring up and engage them in long and dubious contests; but European discipline, as well as European resources and tenacity of purpose, combined with skill in the management of armies, proved an equivalent to the vast hordes and desperate valour of the half-barbarian enemies which fortune created around them. The tide of conquest spread further and still further; absorbing state after state, principally for a long period from the debris of the Delhi Empire. Yet another current still set from the west towards Hindustan; nor was the flight of victory turned back towards the setting sun until that memorable day, when the portals of Ghuzni were blown open, and the lords of the northern Passes defeated in the heart of their mightiest strongholds.

CHAPTER XXII.

HYDER ALI—DEVASTATION OF THE CARNATIC.

THE passage of great events was rapid in India. Scarcely a decade elapsed without a revolution in the politics of some state formed from the ruins of the Delhi monarchy. It was a period of transition. One empire was dissolving away, and another was rising in its place. The power of the Mogul, reduced to a dream or a shadow of the past, held no check on the ambition of adventurous men whom that tide of anarchy carried on to conquest and high positions of command. Nor was the British authority based in security so deep, that it could wield with complete effect the mighty sway so lately abdicated by the fallen lords of India. A portentous crisis also cast doubt on the fortunes

of the mother country. Assailed on every side with danger, she trembled under reiterated shocks of disaster. On the western continent millions of her own race were in arms. France, Spain, and Holland, were preparing to make war. Hostile fleets were ready to be launched on every sea of both worlds;¹ and her prospects in Asia were darkened by the cloud which had just appeared over the western mountains, but now spread far and wide over the face of Hindustan. The marauding hordes of the Mahratta nation had long become imperial conquerors. Their chiefs divided the tribute of wealthy states. Their renown increased, and was long superior to that of every power. The arms of no Indian sovereign could eclipse the brilliancy of theirs. Even the Company was held by them in fear.²

Warren Hastings, with a peculiar and commanding genius, presided over this crisis. Under the administration of a weaker, or even a more delicately scrupulous mind, the British Indian Empire might then have suffered wreck. Happily his choice of policy, frustrated at first by those whom he commissioned to develop it, wrought out a powerful engine which resisted

¹ Heeren: European States and Colonies, ii., 141.

² Duff: Mahratta History.

the formidable encroachments of the Mahratta race.¹ Various smaller transactions, in the meanwhile, gave a settlement to old, or opened new complications.

In the course of the Mahratta war, the cause of Ragobah had been adopted as the rallying cry of the English. He had cheaply purchased, by the cession of Salsette, the aid of those arms which now in all directions struck down the standards of his implacable enemy. His surrender was required as the price of peace ; but the British refused to accept that condition, and the struggle was therefore continued with considerable spirit. In other affairs, pacific or warlike, various success was obtained. A collision with the Sikhs, a treaty with the Rana of Gohud, and numerous conflicts with the predatory Muggs of Arracan, occupied their arms and their diplomacy ; while the outbreak of hostilities with France added a new element to the combined perils which on all sides threatened their fortunes. Enfeebled and humiliated as she was by the revolt of her American colonies, Great Britain still retained strength and spirit to answer with vigour the challenge of her old rivals

¹ Macaulay : Essay on Hastings.

on the coasts of India. The Company then gave to the country aid, the memory of which can never be abolished, and which gratitude can never too liberally reward with honour.¹

In the Carnatic, still covered with the traces of Hyder's destructive irruption,² terrible struggles were again breaking out, dangerous to the very existence of the Company.³ Various arrangements were made which were subsequently modified; but the Company's general policy drew upon them the anger of one among their greatest enemies. This was the same Hyder Ali who had, more than once, wasted with fire and sword the lower plains of southern India.

For thirty years that great adventurer had wielded a conspicuous sword in the countries of the Deccan. With a talent for war and government hitherto unparallelled in the history of India,⁴ this private horseman, the son of a petty revenue officer, had risen to be the general of a mighty army and the ruler of a mighty kingdom. Ignorant even of the alphabet, he had an intellect so lofty and clear that it lighted his way over all

¹ Auber : British Power in India, i., 568.

² Mill : British India, iv., 176.

³ Auber : British Power in India, ii., 516.

⁴ Mill : British India, iv., 258.

the obstacles of fortune. In the prime of his life he had built up from the debris of several states a durable, compact dominion. Now, in his old age, he rivalled the Mahratta power, and became, as an enemy of the Company, almost equally formidable with the fierce conquerors who had poured from the wild, rocky valleys of the western range.

The kingdom of Mysore, now ruled by Hyder Ali, was formerly a principality subject to the great Hindu kingdom of Bejannuggur. That monarchy, breaking when the Mohammedan states were formed in the Deccan, Mysore became independent, and remained with its Hindu institutions and Hindu government, until subdued by the descendant of a Punjab Fakir.¹ Hyder, commencing his career as a horseman in the service of Nunjerag, a usurper in Mysore, rose to the command of a rock fortress. Thence he was elevated to the rank of leader of a marauding force, thence to that of commander in chief, and thence to that independent position whence, at such a period of Oriental history, it was easy for a skilful and daring adventurer to leap with one bound upon a throne. More than

¹ Wilks: South of India.

once he had been at hostilities with the English, and more than once he had sought their alliance; but whether in peace or war he laboured with untiring zeal to aggrandize himself, and was not without his reward.

The Company, it is admitted, was forced by circumstances into the war which now ensued with Hyder Ali.¹ Those circumstances were peculiar. When hostilities were, in 1778, renewed with France, the English determined to capture all the French possessions in India. They carried out their resolve. Mahé, on the Malabar coast, was the last remaining hold of that nation on the peninsula. Its occupation by them was dangerous ; it left a way open through which they might introduce troops, arms, and stores into the interior. Hyder declared that, being built on territory belonging to a chief dependent on him, any attack upon it would be a declaration of war. It was easy for him to make this claim, though he did not care to prove it, and having been supplied with arms and military stores by the French, who sent a number of adventurers to discipline his troops, he was desirous of cultivating the friendship of a nation

¹ Sutherland : Historical Sketch of the Princes of India, 13.

united to him by a common hatred of the English power.¹ Mahé, however, was indisputably a French settlement, and, unless it was reduced, the success of the British arms could only be partial.²

The Mysore sovereign refused to recognise any arguments for the capture of Mahé. He challenged the Company to make it cause of war. They sent him more than one mission to conciliate his pride, but he treated them with a disdain insulting to the British power,³ and organized a plan for the devastation of the Carnatic. It was, according to the orator, English treachery which brought down this tempest, with all its attendant havoc and famine.⁴ Evidently, however, the attack on Mahé was only one cause of the war, and not the original source of his hostility.⁵ The design of Hyder Ali was, and had been, with the Peishwa and the Nizam, to exterminate the English. Any coloured plea was good for that purpose.⁶ Even before the expe-

¹ Mill : *British India*, iv., 167.

² Barchou de Penhoen: *Empire Anglais*, iii., 221.

³ Wilson : *Notes*, iv., 164.

⁴ Burke: *Speech on the Nawab of Arcot's Debts*, iv., 260.

⁵ Captain Thornton : *Historical Summary*, 91.

⁶ *Historical Sketch of the Princes of India*, 13.

dition to Malabar was undertaken his conduct was unmistakeably warlike.¹

Be this as it might, the disaster came as it had threatened. From the high plateau of the Mysore, an awful torrent of armed men—infantry, cavalry, artillery—disciplined to ravage, skilled to slaughter, thirsting for pillage, burst with irresistible fury upon the plains of the Carnatic. Harvests were snatched from under the hands of the reaper, the face of the land was wasted, famine pursued the wake of the army, which broke in all directions over the country, and illumined its way with flames.² From the gates of Madras to the gates of Tanjore a desert was left in the track of Hyder Ali. His licentious host enjoyed a jubilee of rapine, and marched from place to place, exterminating the male sex as they went, insulting the female, and covering the plains with the ruins of many a spoiled and bleeding city. The light of a vast semi-circle of burning villages became visible to our countrymen from the top of Mount St. Thomas. The capital of one of the three Presidencies was actually threatened with annihilation. The red glare in the Eastern sky grew

¹ Life of Schwartz, i., 341—Fifth Report, 25.

² Mill British India, iv., 176.

more deep and bloody in its hue. The cavalry of the Mysore swept past within sight of its suburbs. Their spears glimmered among the palms, and the flower gardens of the city were trampled down by innumerable troops. Some terrible catastrophe appeared ready to overwhelm the English in that country.¹

Fortune, however, has been faithful to the British flag in India. Warren Hastings, at Calcutta, was ignorant of these events, while the military leaders, who should have combined their forces to resist the great enemy, fought one by one, and allowed Hyder to reap laurels on fields contested by English arms.² The Governor-General alone could retrieve the disaster. A swift ship, on the wings of the south-west monsoon, brought the evil tidings to him, while he was speculating on administrative changes in the capital of Bengal. At once his plan was formed —to prosecute the war against Hyder with success, peace must be procured with the Mahrattas. The mediation of Madajee Sindiah brought on this desirable result.³

Ragobah, in whose cause so many exertions had

¹ Macaulay: *Essay on Hastings*.

² Mill: *British India*, iv., 182.

³ Letter from Bengal, May, 1789.

been made, compromised his claims, and accepted a fixed revenue of twenty-two thousand rupees a-month. The forts and districts of Pullapore and Callian, the Autgoms adjoining Salsette, the fort and island of Bassein, with its dependencies, and the important districts in the Goojerat country attached to the chiefships of Surat and Broach, were surrendered to the government of Poonah,¹ and nominally to the wretched descendant of Sevajee, who, in voluptuous indolence, amid the licentious, but beautiful women of his harim, toyed away a worthless life in the state prison of Sattarah.² The Peishwa, or Palace Vizier, shared the name of power, but his Prime Minister, Nana Furnavese, and Madajee Sindiah alone, divided the real dominion of the formidable Mahratta Empire.³

The Company was now free to wield its arms against the French and against their friend, Hyder Ali. The first had now become an inferior consideration. France, which once aspired to supremacy in the East, no longer ranked among the enemies of Great Britain in India, so high as

¹ Auber : British Power in India, i., 622.

² Macaulay : Essay on Hastings.

³ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, iii., 327.

the native powers.¹ It remained to drive out the invader of the Carnatic, who pursued his career of devastation. His system of warfare was peculiarly bloody and cruel. Massacre, pillage, and fire, marked his path, with other atrocities too fearful to describe.² Preparations were now made to bear upon him with every arm of war. While these were completing, however, news was received of his death in December, 1782, at the age, according to some, of little more than eighty,³ and others of more than eighty-four years.⁴ He was esteemed by the English the most formidable enemy with whom they had ever contended,⁵ though the French, who exaggerate the qualities of many among their celebrated men, place him second only to Dupleix. This comparison agrees with the spirit of that national vanity which raises Bossuet above Demosthenes, and classes the Bishop of Meux, and the pupil of Isaeus together, as the two immortal types of oratorical genius!⁶

¹ Mill: *British India*, iv., 160.

² Thornton: *History of India*.

³ Captain Thornton: *Summary History*, 93.

⁴ Penhoen: *Empire Anglais*, iii., 352.

⁵ Auber: *British Power in India*, i., 628.

⁶ Stievenart: *Demosthene—Traduction Nouvelle*, v., 12.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TREATY WITH TIPPOO SULTAN.

TIPPOO SULTAN, son of Hyder, succeeded to the throne of Mysore, and readily accepted his inheritance of war with the English. Their skill, however, prevailed against his courageous genius, and their forces against his vigorous arms, with sufficient success to avert ruin from their dominions; but though the victory of Porto Novo had retrieved the honour of their flag, peace was concluded in 1783, without any accession to its splendour. The Rajah of Tanjore and Travancore, the Biby of Cannanore, the Rajah and the Zemindars on the Malabar coast, joined in the convention. It stipulated that Tippoo was to withdraw altogether from the Carnatic, surrendering every fort except those of

Amboorgur and Latgur. All the European and native prisoners were to be released; on the other hand, the forts of Onore, Carwar, and Sadashevagar, with the districts of Caroor, Annachourchy, and Duraparam, as well as Dindigul, were to be delivered up to Tippoo, who relinquished all claims on the territories of Mohammed Ali, our ally. Cannanore should be given up to Ali Rajah Biby, its legitimate queen. The privileges of commerce, which Hyder had granted Tippoo, were to continue to the Company, and Calicut was evacuated by them.¹ Tranquillity was thus restored to British India.

¹ Auber: British Power in India, i., 641.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WARREN HASTINGS' ADMINISTRATION.

THE transaction with the Rajah of Benares has already been noticed. The other salient points in the administrative policy of Warren Hastings are—the hanging of Nuncomar, and the transaction with Sir Elijah Impey. Neither of these belongs to the present inquiry; and I shall say nothing of the first, except that it was the last stroke between two daring and desperate men, in a struggle in which one must be destroyed. With respect to the second, I would point attention to the fact, that the Chief Justice of Calcutta, when he condemned the Brahmin, shared his crime—if it was a crime—with others upon whom a suspicion rests; and that when he put up the judicial sword which was making war on the ancient

manners of India, others were also concerned.¹ It does not appear just, and it is scarcely decent, to compare him with Jeffries.² The memory of the dead is sometimes dear to the living. The pen of his son has devoted its long and pious labours to rescue his reputation from the obloquy which had been cast upon it; and whatever may be thought of Sir Elijah Impey, no one can too warmly praise the affectionate and manly spirit which inspired his vindication by one who undertook it as a sacred duty.³ This is not the place to analyse the defence, any more than to examine the acts condemned; but I may say that the imputations against the Chief Justice are, in my opinion, successfully encountered. At all events, it is not for any one to condemn the father without reading the work of the son.

These transactions, with others of inferior consequence, closed the remarkable career of Warren Hastings as Governor-General. The dreams of the ambitious boy who lay in the grass on the banks of the Isis, in the domain of Daylesford, in Worcestershire, had been far outshone, though their recollection had never faded, amid the

¹ E. B. Impey: *Memoirs of Impey*.

² Macaulay: *Essay on Hastings*.

³ E. B. Impey: *Memoirs of Sir Elijah Impey*.

splendid reality of his life in manhood. Ruling fifty millions of Asiatics in the countries of the rising sun, he had dazzled even the dwellers in the old Empire of the Great Mogul, by the luxury and magnificence with which he surrounded himself. The sumptuous state of the peacock throne scarcely rivalled the brilliance and richness of the Governor-General's palace. Thus, he had probably far outstripped the ambition of his earlier years. He had risen to renown and power above the paradise of his heart's most infatuated reveries; yet the humbler desire conceived in his breast as he sunned himself on the sward by the river Isis, never left him while he ruled with imperial authority between the waves of the Indus and the Ganges; and he died in the old house at Daylesford.¹

It is here interesting, and it is in adherence to the original purpose of these essays—which direct to a judgment on the conduct of the British in India—to dwell for a moment on the achievements and on the fate of Warren Hastings. Incontestibly his was a personal policy. He is answerable for its whole design, if not for the circumstances which called for action; yet he was the representative of the Company, which,

¹ Macaulay: *Essay on Hastings*.

indeed, by unqualified approbation of his long, zealous, and successful services, accepts for itself the judgment of posterity upon his public acts.¹

He had reigned during a period of unexampled difficulty ; he had contended with European, Mohammedan and Mahratta powers. His own colleagues had obstructed his plans, and to their unprincipled hostility, as much as to his own audacious genius, we may trace the origin of some among his early acts. He had contributed no little to the glory of this country.² The rice-reaper on the wide plains bordering the Ganges, had reason to bless the sword which, under the hand of Warren Hastings, protected harvests that had never been safe before. It is not true that his name was muttered in curses by the people of India, or that they erected a temple to him as to a malignant spirit—the genius of small-pox or murder.³ The time has gone by when that assertion from the lips of a brilliant orator could sink into the convictions of an audience of statesmen and politicians. On the contrary, he inspired the natives under his rule with universal

¹ Resolution, Jan., 1820, for Statue to Hastings.

² Auber : British Power in India, i., 689.

³ Burke : Speech against Hastings.

respect, if not with universal love. His name was a familiar word in their mouths, and has passed from cottage to cottage, from hearth to hearth, and from mother to child, in songs and proverbs which speak of him as the greatest of his race.¹

Yet, when he returned home, twenty-two articles of impeachment, and a trial of unparalleled duration, awaited him.² Retiring from the troubles of Indian politics, he met a storm of public vituperation, which beat upon him with unremitting fury during ten years. It was left for posterity to do him justice, to make atonement to his name, to divide his good from his evil deeds, to discriminate between the acts of obedience to necessity, and the acts of obedience to a profligate will. His chief honours were heaped upon his grave, as those of many great men have been. Others, with far less claim to estimation, though less daring in their offences, as well as less gigantic in their achievements, have returned from India to hear nobles welcome them at festivals, high dignitaries of Church consecrate their memories to public reverence, and statesmen

¹ Gleig : Memoirs of Warren Hastings.

² Majoribank: Speech on Proposing the Statue.

thank them in the name of their country, amid universal cheers, whose reiterated echoes made the old oaken arches of Westminster ring, and the roof tremble as they broke again and again from the senatorial assembly. It was his lot to stand at the bar of the Peers, to be impeached for high crimes and misdemeanours, to kneel while his indictment was read, and, instead of laudation, to listen while the greatest living masters of eloquence, and foremost politicians of the day, delivered orations of dazzling splendour, in which fancy, rhetoric, passion, and all the resources of the speaker's art, were called up to paint the enormity of his villanies and charge accumulated crimes upon his head. He heard women shriek, and saw them faint, at the description of his deeds.¹ He was told that he feasted in the dark, that he feasted alone, that he feasted like a wild beast on the spoils of India ; that he growled in a corner over the dying and the dead, like the tigers of that country, who drag their prey into the jungle.² Twenty-seven years afterwards he stood at the bar of the Commons House of Parliament, with the honours of eighty years on

¹ Macaulay: *Essay on Hastings.*

² Burke: *Speech against Hastings, Works, xiv., 41.*

his grey head. Loud and reiterated cheers broke from the assembly. All but one or two rose to pay him respect.¹ Which was the reception he deserved?

He deserved neither the bitter expressions of the one, nor the unqualified applause of the other. The infamous transaction with Rohilcund, and the torturing of the wretched eunuchs at Lucknow, should have been remembered by those who charged the managers of the impeachment with exhausting their energies in the persecution of an innocent man. His great services to England at a time when, shaken as she was by the American war, he might have declared himself an independent King of India,² should not have been forgotten by those who denounced him as an inveterate enemy of human nature, as the oppressor of the poor, as a disgrace to his country, and as a traitor to the trust of Parliament.³ If we impartially weigh his conduct, we shall not deny him a great claim to admiration. He aimed, I believe, as he declared,⁴ at the glory of his country;—he aimed

¹ Mill : British India—Wilson : Notes, v., 274.

² Alison : History of Europe, vii., 409.

³ Speeches of Burke, Fox, Sheridan.

⁴ Warren Hastings : Reply to the Charges.

at achieving a shining renown ;—he aimed at accomplishing remarkable things. In all this he succeeded. Still I agree with the writer who refuses him credit for any pure political morality.¹

¹ Macaulay : Essay on Hastings.

CHAPTER XXV.

FIRST GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

THOUGH, as I have said, the British Indian Empire dilated under the hand of Hastings as well as Clive, few acquisitions of territory were made. An immense access of virtual power, however, had been secured. Wars there had been, but they were not wars of aggression ; they were in defence of a dominion already acquired, and they opened the way to future acts of territorial extension. All conquest, said a philosopher, quoted by the elegant historian of the Roman decline, must be ineffectual which is not universal, since the increasing circle must be involved in a wider sphere of hostility.¹ We may look, indeed, through the whole course of

¹ Gallard : Quoted in Gibbon, Decl. and Fall, ix., 149.

events, and find only the country of Ghazeepoor and the Zemindary of Benares wrested, by actual force of arms, from its possessor. The sword, it is true, hung, unseen, in the balance; but every other province had been obtained by amicable grant.

The Company, wearied by the long wars forced on the English by the faithlessness, rapacity, implacable hatred, or pride, of the Indian powers, resolved now, by all means, to avoid its recurrence.¹ The declarations so frequently made throughout their career,² and made often with unfortunate sincerity,³ were earnestly renewed—that no further extension of dominion was desired, but, rather, the good government of what they already possessed. Therefore, when Madajee Sindiah, of the Maharratta state, proposed, in July, 1785, to ally himself, the Nizam, and the Peishwa, with the English, against Tippoo Sultan, they peremptorily refused.⁴

In 1786, a revolution in the political constitution of the East India Company, took place,

¹ Auber: *British Power in India*, ii., 21.

² W. Hamilton: *Hindustan*, i.

³ Alison: *History of Europe*, vii.

⁴ Auber: *British Power in India*, ii., 40.

and a Governor-General was invested with new and uncontrolled powers. The first person chosen to fill this superb office, was Lord Cornwallis. In the year indicated, he assumed the administration, going out armed with full instructions for his guidance. The first transactions in which he engaged were those with Hyderabad. It will be useful to notice the situation of that state, and the relations in which it had stood to the British Government.

The dynasty of Hyderabad originated with Nizam-ul-Mulk, that Subahdar of the Deccan the succession to whose tributary throne was one cause of the great war in the Carnatic. To the English he was always known as the Nizam, though to the natives as the Subahdar. He became independent upon the wreck of the Mogul monarchy, and established a powerful state between Bengal and Madras, with the territories of the Mysore, of the Mahrattas, and of the English, contiguous to his own; while thirteen millions of people accepted the laws from him. His first intimate connection with the English took place in 1766, when the Company consented to rent the Northern Circars of him, and defray the charge of some troops for his service. Next year, though bound by a

pledge of faith, he formed, with Hyder Ali, a plot against the English; but, in 1768, a new treaty was concluded. He reduced their tribute, which had been nine lacs, to seven; he consented to the act which absolved the Nawab of the Carnatic from dependence on him; he declared Hyder Ali a usurper; transferred the Balaghaut districts to the Company; and settled the subsidiary question. The peace with Mysore, which ensued shortly after, set aside some of these stipulations; but, in 1779, the Nizam, Hyder Ali, and all the Mahrattas, confederated against the English, who yielded a point declared to be the ground of offence.¹ Lord Cornwallis arranged with the Hyderabad ruler for the full reversion of the Guntoo Circar,² which, according to the treaty of 1768, was surrendered in 1788. The conduct of this faithless, intriguing, ungrateful prince, entitled him to far less consideration than he received.³

¹ Historical Sketch of the Princes of India, 85.

² Mill: British India, v., 315.

³ Auber: British Power in India, ii., 65.

CHAPTER XXVI.

COMPLICATIONS WITH TIPPOO SULTAN.

LORD CORNWALLIS, an able statesman of penetrating sight, was forbidden by his instructions from forming any new defensive alliances which might endanger the peace of India.¹ The Company, however, explicitly expressed their resolve "to protect their own territories and the territories of those with whom they were allied." Being bound thus to take part in no transaction not involving their own interests, or those of the states attached by treaty to them, it needed no strained interpretation, or unfair retreat upon the convention of 1788, to allow the Nizam a body of troops, though stipulating that they should not be employed against the

¹ Mill : British India, v., 319.

Company's allies—the Mahratta chiefs, the Nawabs of Oude and Arcot, the Rajahs of Tanjore and Travancore. The hostile designs of Tippoo were well known: all viewed him with suspicion.¹ No region contiguous to the Mysore could hold itself safe while his terrible cavalry hovered on the mountains, ever ready to burst like a thunder-cloud upon the plains of the neighbouring provinces. A compact, indeed, had been made with Tippoo, acknowledging his right to the territories he then possessed; so that a new defensive treaty with the Nizam, or the revival of an old one, appeared offensive to him. It has been characterised as questionable in point of faith, and injurious to the Mysore sovereign.² But it is forgotten that he was, at the time when he appealed to our faith, plotting against us. The Nizam, when he sent an envoy to request a strong defensive treaty from the English, sent one also to Tippoo, proposing an offensive and defensive alliance; and it was only because Tippoo desired to strengthen the engagement by a marriage, that he refused to conclude it.³

The Nizam proposed to develop those terms

¹ Auber: British Power in India, ii., 56.

² Malcolm: Political History of India, 69.

³ Wilks: Historical Sketch, 26.

of the old treaty, which would have invested the Company with the dewanee of the Balaghaut districts, now belonging to Tippoo. They replied that circumstances had changed ; that this agreement had been superseded by others ; that they were bound by a treaty with Mysore ; but that, should it ever happen that the territory came into their hands, they would be faithful to their promises with respect to it—that is, they were now at peace, but should war arise, they would remember their engagements.¹ It may have been a blemish on the finesse of the Governor-General's diplomacy, to hint at the possibility of future embroilment with a state not then in arms against him. He should have remembered that the forms of that science exclude all allusions to probabilities not pleasant to the contracting parties, however evident to the political view ; but it does not by any means appear that he broke faith with Tippoo Sultan. The circumstances of the period called for every precaution ; for the ruler of Mysore was a man who perpetually appealed to the spirit of a charter, while he was perpetually, deliberately, and systematically violating it, claiming ever concession from

¹ Cornwallis : Letter to Nizam, July, 1789.

the friendship of the English, while he matured plots the most desperate against them. Confessedly the treaty with Hyderabad was not the origin of the war which ensued; for this sprang from a violent aggression on the part of Tippoo,¹ who throughout forced upon the Company a conviction of his hostile designs. It is not pretended that he would have refrained from a single encroachment or injury, had the Nizam never corresponded with us respecting the ceded districts of the Carnatic.

Lord Cornwallis, therefore, was in a difficult position. Events were thickening in his view, against which he could not, in a statesmanlike manner, prepare, in exact obedience to the letter of the Act of Parliament. He chose a bold and a wise part. His instructions said one thing; but his duty said another. Shortly, however, Tippoo relieved him from doubt, by acts which allowed him, while obeying the Imperial Government, to develop a vigorous policy; and it was not long before the truth of these views was demonstrated to his mind.

¹ Malcolm : Political Hist. of India, 61.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WAR DECLARED AGAINST TIPPOO.

THE Rajah of Cherika was a petty prince on the Malabar coast, in whose territory was situated the Company's factory of Tellicherry. Tributary to Tippoo Sultan, he had, nevertheless, entered into friendly relations with the English, who lent him large amounts of money and military stores. In 1765, the debt was considerable, and, unable or unwilling to pay it, he assigned the district of Rhandaterrah in liquidation. The Company also farmed of him the customs of Tellicherry; but settlement had been neglected, and still new loans were made to the Rajah. About the beginning of 1756, without provocation, he sent a body of armed men, and drove away the English guard from the English terri-

tory of Rhandaterrah. Thereupon his account was presented, which showed he was deeply in debt, and he was challenged to explain his conduct; at the same time, however, the forcible re-occupation of the place was forbidden, lest it should endanger the prevailing peace. The chieftain evaded payment; and when an appeal was made to Tippoo, that crafty sovereign declared he had ordered the restoration of Rhandaterrah. The Rajah denied this, and produced a letter in which the Sultan merely desired him to settle his affairs.¹ The seed of new complications was sown.

In the very bosom of peace, Tippoo was perpetually dreaming of war. He never ceased to frame designs against the English. In July, 1787, he sent an embassy to France, in great pomp, to demand an alliance in case of war.² It was to be an alliance especially against the English.³ It was unsuccessful, but the Sultan continued, nevertheless, to prepare. Early in 1778, he descended the Ghauts, with what deep projects in his mind we know not, but professing to survey his coast dominions. He asserted that he had desired the Rajah of Cherika to redeem his

¹ Mill : British India, v., 324.

² Penhoen : Empire Anglais, iv., 43.

³ Dubois de Jancigny—Xavier Raymond : L'Inde, 518.

faith. The Rajah refused, and the idea struck Lord Cornwallis that this was a wily plan to provoke a war.¹ Many events combined to precipitate that catastrophe.

At the mouth of the Chinnamangalam, near Vipeen Isle, about twenty miles from the old and rich city of Cochin, commences the territory of Travancore. It extends thence to those sublime rocks, watched by the castles of the ancient lords of the land, which form the southern point of India. On the west, it is bounded by the sea, and on the east, by the pine-plumed crests of a towering range,² which then separated it from the British province of Tinnivelly. The Rajah had, in a friendly spirit, aided the English by furnishing their magazines, and been placed, as a reward, in the treaty with Tippoo, among their other allies.³ He was now, therefore, under their protection.⁴ Reigning, as he did, on that side of the Ghauts, as the only remaining prince who had escaped the absorbing element of the Sultan's ambition, he alone prevented him from floating his standard over the whole region from the frontiers of the Mahratta

¹ Mill: British India, v., 324.

² Hamilton: Hindustan, ii., 309.

³ Malcolm: Political Hist. of India, 61.

⁴ Capt. Thornton: Summary History, 95.

Empire to the southern extremity of Hindustan. Established in Travancore, Tippoo would have been in close, and, therefore, dangerous proximity with the remote and almost defenceless British province of Tinnivelly. The English and their ally, consequently, had equal reason to be terrified by the descent of a Mysore army. Meanwhile the Sultan proceeded to unfold his plans, and directed his operations upon Cochin.

The Zamorin, or Chief of Calicut, on the same sea, had once endeavoured to subjugate the commercial city of Cochin, which was aided in the preservation of its independence by the Rajah of Travancore. This assistance being permanently necessary, the Cochinese Rajah had made over, in liquidation of the expense, two small districts adjoining the territory of his ally. His capital, with a portion of his country, was, therefore, included within a wall, or line of defence, drawn from the sea, at Vipeen Isle eastward, about thirty miles to the Elephant Hills, which branch from the great chain of southern India. Part of the province still lay exposed; and when Hyder assaulted this, the Cochin Rajah, to save it, became tributary to him.

When Tippoo descended in 1778, he held an interview with the prince, who reported to his

ally of Travancore, that he had been desired to request the restoration of the ceded districts, and received a promise that the Mysore banners should be lifted in his cause. The Rajah of Travancore made this known to the English, who were engaged by treaty to protect him, praying for a body of troops, to show that he was their ally. Some of the Company's battalions were accordingly posted behind the wall. Tippoo this time retired, but ten years later again descended, and presented a demand for the surrender of the Dutch fort of Cranganore, which, with that of Jaycottah, was near their grand settlement at Cochin. They were situated on the sea, close to the wall, and regarded as essential for its defence. The Rajah of Travancore prepared to join the Dutch in protecting them. He desired the English to notice that they formed the gateway of his country, and that he was bound to a defensive alliance with the traders of Holland. They advised him to be moderate in his conduct, and aim at averting a conflict. Meanwhile, news reached the Supreme Government that Tellicherry was blockaded by land and sea, and that Tippoo had reduced it to extreme straits. That was in itself a declaration of war.¹

¹ Mill : British India, 329.

Notwithstanding this, and a variety of other insults and aggressions, the English strove to ward off hostilities.¹ The spirit which inspired the counsels of Tippoo was plainly displayed, yet it was still conceived possible to avert a rupture. They refused to assist the Rajah of Travancore in the defence of any territory but his own. Whereupon, to include Cranganore and Jaycottah under that title, he agreed with the Dutch to buy them—a transaction which Lord Cornwallis, in his regard for the rights of the Mysore power, at first refused to acknowledge or even to allow, since Tippoo declared the ground belonged to his tributary and subject, the Rajah of Cochin. It would, under these circumstances, have formed part of his empire. But it was then proved that Cochin was one of the early Portuguese conquests—that Cranganore and Jaycottah were their dependencies—that the Rajah of Cochin paid them tribute—that these possessions were acquired in war by the Dutch, and that as the Rajah of Cochin had had no claim on them for more than a hundred years, so neither had Tippoo.² Their sale to the Rajah was at once prudent and just, not

¹ Historical Sketch of the Princes of India, 62.

² Mill : British India, v., 334.

withstanding that it offended the Sultan, who could now be conciliated only by some unworthy and humiliating concession on the part of the English.¹ Whereupon Lord Cornwallis proclaimed that the invasion of any territory belonging to the Rajah of Travancore would be a signal for the Company to take up arms. It is indeed acknowledged a fair cause of war.² He proposed once more, however, a quiet settlement of the dispute. It had been proved that Cranganore and Jaycottah had belonged to the Dutch long before Cochin became tributary to Mysore, so that the Rajah of Travancore had a perfect right to buy them.³ This, therefore, could by no means be conceded to the powerful adventurer, unless Lord Cornwallis were inclined to sacrifice, for the sake of a temporary peace, the country of an ally he was pledged to protect, and the honour of his nation, which it was his duty to uphold.

Tippoo refused to be persuaded by the plain logic of justice. Troops of his horse, terrible as those bred amid the sands of Parthia, suddenly appeared without warning, ravaging the

¹ Auber : British Power in India, ii., 104.

² Dubois de Jancigny—Xavier Raymond : L'Inde, 518.

³ Malcolm : Political Hist. of India, 82.

country within a mile of the frontier wall. He then sent to the Rajah certain demands:—

The extradition of some refugee chiefs and refractory Mysore subjects, who were harboured in Travancore; the withdrawal of his troops from Cranganore, which he had purchased from the Dutch; and the destruction of that part of this wall, which lay within the former limits of the Cochin province.

The Rajah replied, that the refugee chiefs were his own relations, who had lived many years in undisturbed sanctuary with him under the sacred roof of hospitality; that no refractory subjects of Tippoo had ever, to his knowledge, been harboured in Travancore; that the fort and territory demanded from him, were his by right of purchase from the Dutch; that the ground on which the wall was built had been ceded to him in full sovereignty by the Rajah of Cochin before he became in any manner tributary to Mysore, and that, as this transaction was tacitly acknowledged by the silence of the recent treaty, in which Tippoo was a partner, no power in the East could have a claim to disturb it. Tippoo immediately entered the field, stormed the lines at Travancore, absolved all the states

from engagements with him, and challenged them all to arms by his aggression.¹

Lord Cornwallis was no longer under the restraint of his instructions. It remained for him to preside as a statesman over the war in which this aggression had involved him. He directed the British resident at Hyderabad to inform the Nizam of the infraction, to expose to him the perfidious character of Tippoo, and to explain to him the advantages he would derive from continuing his faith to the Company. He was informed also that he should enjoy a full share of any fruits which might be gathered from the war, and should, if he desired it, be guaranteed in their possession.²

A triple alliance between the Company, the state of Poonah, and the Nizam, was then formed to punish Tippoo Sultan. Some difficulty, it is said, arose with the Mahrattas;³ but this is improbable, as they were then at war with the autocrat of Seringapatam.⁴ He had broken faith with all. A common cause, therefore, united his enemies.⁵ The Nizam engaged himself by treaty,

¹ Auber : British Power in India, 104.

² Malcolm : Political History of India, 70.

³ Mill : British India, v., 358.

⁴ Wilson : Notes to Mill, *ibid.*

⁵ Declaration—Auber, ii., 105.

the Mahrattas, though their co-operation was not demanded as a duty, were persuaded to join, and Lord Cornwallis was absolved, confessedly, from every compact with the proud, implacable descendant of Hyder Ali.¹ He had remained faithful to his declared policy of peace, and suffered many irritations, until absolutely forced once more to draw a sword which it had been his hope long to have hidden in the sheath.²

Now, therefore, three powers, representing three systems of civilization, took the field under one flag—the Mahrattas representing the fiery races of Western India; the Nizam, or leader of the Mussulman arms; and the Company, a new influence sprung from the bosom of Christendom against a power more barbarous than one, less barbarous than another, but equally hateful to all.

¹ Penhoen: *Empire Anglais*, iv., 54.

² Mill: *British India*, v., 344.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONQUESTS IN THE MYSORE.

IT was one maxim bequeathed by the political philosopher of the Lyceum, that they who often submit to injuries without making reprisals, only expose themselves to new wrongs.¹ They who truckle to a rapacious enemy, in the hope of preserving unbroken the seal of peace, never succeed;—while they satisfy one demand, another is made, until they are only inspired to resistance when nothing is left them worth defending. Lord Cornwallis was superior to this false policy. He avowed explicitly his intention, not only to repel the aggression which had been made, but also to obtain political advantage from the war.

The conditions of the treaty accordingly were

¹ Aristotle : Rhetoric, v., 12.

an equal partition of conquests, and a future confederation to resist the encroachments of the Mysore arms. It was determined, and justly, to punish the faithlessness of Tippoo; to exact from him indemnification for all losses occasioned by this war; to force his restoration to the Nizam of all his father had taken from him; to wrest from him his possessions in the Carnatic Payen Ghaut; to relieve the Nairs of Malabar from his barbarous and intolerable tyranny,¹ and to cripple his means of disturbing the tranquillity of Asia. After all, nevertheless, new efforts were made to preserve an honourable peace; but his uncompromising hostility defeated every endeavour.² The allied armies then took the field with a vigour which was warmly applauded by a resolution, and sanctioned by an Act of Parliament.³ Tippoo, at first successful, swept the Carnatic once more with a host of cavalry, which passed like a hurricane over the country, strewing it with the wrecks of all that industry had piled up at the feet of peace.

The Governor-General took the field in person. It was a protracted struggle. The siege of

¹ Malcolm; Political History of India, 79.

² Mill: British India, v., 344.

³ Auber: British Power in India, ii., 127.

Bangalore, the battle of Arikera, the capture of the fortresses in the rocky gates of the Carnatic, all these are familiar events to the students of Indian military history. On the 5th of February, 1792, the British army marched over the barren heights above the valley of Millgotah, and there commanded a view of the mighty fortress of Seringapatam, the nest of hewn stone, formidable even in the eyes of the British soldier, where Tippoo had brooded over his ambitious designs, and indulged his dreams of hatred in visionary triumphs over the strangers who had so lately imposed a yoke on Asia. Nature and art combined to render its defences strong. An immense extended camp without the walls, held the flower of the Sultan's troops. Before the end of the month this was stormed.

The great adventurer seemed paralyzed by that one blow.¹ Submission alone could now save his crown and a remnant of his kingdom.² In dejected humiliation, he accepted terms of peace. The payment of three crores of rupees to cover the expenses of the war—the restoration of all prisoners—the delivery of his two younger sons as hostages, and the surrender of half his king-

¹ Thornton : History of India.

² Captain Thornton : Summary History, 101.

dom—such were the concessions to which this great enemy of the English, renowned for his pride, felt himself compelled to bend. Great was the revolution in his fortune. A long interval had not elapsed since his father had raged like a tropical storm through the plains of southern India, and the white men in Madras had seen, by the light of their own blazing villages, his desolating horse pass like clouds over the prospect. Now the enemy, then terrified, was victorious in the heart of his empire, dictating peace to him under the canopy of his own throne. The East is the region of rapid and startling vicissitudes.

The partition of conquests was soon arranged. The Mahratta frontier was extended as far as the river Toombuddra—that of the Nizam from the Kistna beyond the Pennah; while the British received Baramahl, the Lower Ghauts, Salem, the districts round Dindigul, and the tributary territories on the coast of Malabar. These acquisitions, by their actual value, formed scarcely an equivalent for the cost; but the policy and conduct of the war earned for Lord Cornwallis, and the armies he directed,¹ a universal tribute

¹ Mill : British India, v., 462.

of applause. The advantages gained had been considerable; Baramahl all but closed the Carnatic against the chance of a new invasion. Every hope which lingered to the French of becoming a nation in India, was now altogether extinguished. Tippoo was no longer powerful enough to threaten all his neighbours with ruin.¹ Large masses of the native population, also, were rescued from a barbarous tyranny; and that revolution brought to them blessings of which they never knew the worth.² A few years of tranquillity were thus secured to the peninsula.

Large acquisitions of territory were the result of this war with Tippoo. Salem is an extensive province, lying above the Ghauts, and west of the Carnatic. Its surface throughout is of great elevation, being a table land watered by the Cavery, the Panar, and the Palar Rivers, which penetrate the mountains, and flow impetuously to the Bay of Bengal. Indian corn, rice, and cotton, are the chief productions. The Baramahl is rather a subdivision of the Salem than a separate province, and contains numerous towns and villages; some lying amid levels, like

¹ Historical Sketch of the Princes of India, 63.

² Hamilton : Hindustan, ii., 359.

the rice lands of the Egyptian Delta; others perched upon fortified rocks, which once kept the whole country in awe. Dindigul is a province of the Carnatic, and enjoys one of the finest climates in India. The population is about three millions, and these, when the conquest took place, were overwhelmed by poverty and degradation. A beneficial change has since taken place, through the superior system of administration.¹ Men are still living who have heard, from the lips of Tippoo's subjects, accounts of his destructive government. At intervals he made a progress through the kingdom; and whenever his banners appeared, it was a signal for rich men to hide their wealth, and for the poor to fly into the jungle.² He however knew who had valuable possessions, and seldom failed to extort the contributions he desired. When these failed, it was his habit to look beyond the limits of his own country, of inferior fertility, as it was, and "insult the plenty" of the regions below.³

¹ Hamilton : Hindustan, ii., 394-5, 466-67.

² See Annual Register, 1791, chap. x.

³ Forbes : Unpublished Notes.

CHAPTER XXIX.

POLICY OF THE MYSORE WAR.

THIS war had opened a new era in the political history of India. Formerly Tippoo was valued as a barrier between the Mahrattas and the Carnatic. Events had demonstrated, however, that whoever might be conciliated, he must be humbled; and when this important task was performed, changes by no means inconsiderable resulted to many of the native states.¹ Tippoo lost half his kingdom, but fomented in his soul still fiercer hatred of the English. The war, therefore, which afterwards struck him down amid the ruins of Seringapatam, opened directly from this which humbled his crown, and planted in his breast an inveterate desire for revenge.²

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, iv., 216.

² Heeren : European States and Colonies, ii., 213.

No one, however, can deny that the history of India supplies a full and obvious justification of the conquest. The transactions with the Rajah of Cherika, the attack on the country of a British ally, whom he had recognised by treaty among the princes under British protection,¹ and the commencement of hostilities before an open declaration of them, with the destructive invasion of the Carnatic, and the refusal of every approach to peace—all these hurried the Company on to war. When it had concluded, and the unwarned Tippoo lay within the batteries of Seringapatam, receiving the terms of a treaty at the cannon's mouth, nothing remained for a bold or prudent statesman but to reap the legitimate advantage of such a triumph. Lord Cornwallis, the Commander-in-Chief, was worthily succeeded by Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General.

In the council he completed what he had prepared in the camp. He left it for a successor to win barren fields, and called upon the implacable enemy of British power, who was no less perfidious than cruel, to make an atonement for the wasted blood—for the expended treasure—for the labours of the campaign which had punished his treachery, and to restore some equivalent for

¹ Malcolm : Political History of India

the desolated villages—the burned harvests—the blasted vintage, and fruitful provinces laid in ashes by his remorseless hand—trampled into ruin by the flying squadrons of his fierce unsparing cavalry. They who shared the toil of this struggle shared in its reward; and if the English acquired a wide extension of dominion, it was so far from being a shame to their reputation—the honourable trophy of an achievement, which, to justify fully, it is necessary only fairly to describe.

The remark has been made that Lord Cornwallis, framing a treaty under the walls of Seringapatam, acquired too much or too little from the Sultan of the Mysore—too much, if he desired to be liberal in the use of victory—too little, if he aimed at destroying the formidable power of Tippoo.

Considering that, by the admission of most writers, the fruits of conquest were scarcely an equivalent to its expense, it is difficult to conceive how he took too much. Some, indeed, maintain that the only use of the sword is to reap abstract glory from the field of battle, not in a sordid spirit of economy to pay the cost of necessary wars. To such I leave the argument entire. They will probably find few adherents

except French poets, and those philosophers of a modern academy, who imagine theories, call them laws of nature, and ascribe the lust of conquest to the development of some peculiar inequality in the skull. All others must acknowledge, that when an enemy on the borders of an empire indulges, without ceasing, his passion for war, it is only just, when he is defeated, to charge upon him the loss of the adventure.

As for those who believe that Lord Cornwallis secured too little of the Mysore Empire, I am not inclined to dispute with them; the advocates of native princes may monopolise that task. When, however, a statesman, through moderation, not timidity, forbears to retain all that has fallen into his power, he surely acquires a right to commendation from every historian who does not bind his pen to unqualified censure on the acts of the English Company. It had been more auspicious, perhaps, for the peace of India, and it would certainly have been better for the people of the Mysore, had the whole empire on that day passed under the administration of Great Britain. The future might have sanctioned such a course, yet to crush entirely a fallen enemy, wrest from him at once his whole possessions, to leave him no chance of becoming a friendly ally of the

British power, would have been, perhaps, an immoderate use of success, and entailed on Lord Cornwallis, not unjustly, the stigma of rapacity. The retaliation of an injury is only a requital, so long as your foe is in a position or a temper to continue his acts of hostility. After that, retaliation becomes revenge, and the vindictive passion is the most hateful of all those which reside in the human breast.

As it was, the Governor-General fairly divided his policy into consideration for his humbled enemy, and respect for his country, whose interests he was bound to hold in view, while he measured out justice to Tippoo Sultan.¹

¹ For a picture of Tippoo Sultan's administration, see Buchanan's Mysore, i., 55. Four-tenths of the cultivators were driven away by his oppression. Hyder Ali was superior in liberality and genius.

CHAPTER XXX.

RELATIONS WITH THE MAHRATTAS.

RUMOURS from Europe of an approaching war with the Catholic powers of France and Spain, caused the peace of Seringapatam to be regarded as a fortunate event. It was followed by diplomatic settlements in various other directions. With the Nizam of Hydrabad no absolute change of relations took place; but he became more closely united with the British Government, and continued to subsidise a body of troops. In Poonah, however, unfriendly feelings arose, and gave new proof that the Mahrattas could never be viewed as cordial allies of the Company.

On the conclusion of the war with Tippoo, a proposition had been made by the commander of the Peishwa's army to subsidise a British detach-

ment, of equal strength, and on similar terms to that which was in the service of Hyderabad. The object professed was that of bringing into subjection any refractory dependents who might break the peace of the empire. Lord Cornwallis declined, on general grounds, to give assent; but stated that his principal objection to the measure was, that the force was intended to coerce Madajee Sindiah, whose ambition was formidable to the Peishwa's minister.¹

It would have been a flagrant breach of faith to have hired out our troops for such a purpose. Madajee Sindiah had, by the treaty of Salbye, as well as by more recent engagements, been recognised as an independent prince, and Lord Cornwallis desired to interfere in no transactions which did not directly concern the British Government or its protected adherents. Sindiah meanwhile aggrandised himself in many ways. He had offered to join in the crusade against Tippoo, but required at the time aid against the Rajpoot states of central India, which could not be granted. Therefore no alliance was formed with him, and he was suspected of acting in hostility to the English.

¹ Thornton : History of India.

Sindiah had in his possession the Emperor, as well as the city of Delhi, and, in 1792, there was circulated a paper, which stated that the fallen potentate had written to the Peishwa, and to his real master, that he desired to obtain some tribute from Bengal—the Lombardy of Asia—which, in the course of ten years, had changed from a Mogul to a British province.¹ Lord Cornwallis at once informed Sindiah, that he knew the true source of this document, and would resent any insult of a similar kind. This produced the right effect, and no more was heard of the tribute, which had long, by express treaty, been renounced.²

¹ Alison : History of Europe, vii.

² Mill : British India, v., 464.

CHAPTER. XXXI.

NEW ARRANGEMENTS IN THE CARNATIC.

WITH the Carnatic, which had now become identified with the British Government, Lord Cornwallis cultivated a more intimate alliance, with a view of consolidating, on more durable foundations, the peace of India.

Before he arrived, the treaty had been negotiated with the prince of that country, to provide for the defence of the Carnatic and the Northern Circars. It was concluded in February, 1787. The principal conditions were, that the Nawab should annually contribute nine lacs of star pagodas for the support of the Company's military peace establishment, and that certain districts were to be held in security of payment; but no interference with them was to take place,

except to receive the actual revenue. In time of war, however, the Company should charge themselves with the whole administration; while four-fifths of the proceeds from their territory and his, should go towards the expense; and this was regarded as an improvement of the political relations existing between the Company and the Nizam. It, indeed, gave the whole military defence of the Carnatic to the English, and thus spared the chance of many wars; yet it left open a way to new complications, which speedily arose.

The Nizam failed to keep faith, not only from neglect, but in compliance with the advice of his profligate ministers. The Company, nevertheless, added to his cause for gratitude, by protecting him when he lay helpless at the foot of an enemy; and, after the war with Tippoo, a new convention was negotiated. It stipulated that, in case of war, the whole Carnatic should be placed in the hands of the English, who would, under certain stipulations, return it to him upon the conclusion of peace. Many arrangements were made to secure the amicable settlement of the debt, and the efficient collection of the revenue. But the government of the Carnatic was incurably corrupt. It was rotten

to the core. Originally established in power by the English, the Nizam had never stood alone; but, by extravagance, by anticipating his revenue, and by every species of maladministration, reduced his country to that condition out of which no native power could raise it.

CHAPTER XXXII.

POLITICS OF OUDE.

WITH the principality of Oude, now independent, a new arrangement was also made. To understand this, a short notice must be taken of our previous connections with its rulers.

The treaty of Fyzabad, contracted in 1775, with Asaph-ul-Dowlah, gave the Company possession of Benares, the district of Ghazeepoor, celebrated for the rich fragrance of its rose-water and the excessive fertility of its soil, and Chunar, on the southern bank of the Ganges.¹ A subsidiary force was granted him for the protection of his Subah—Corah, Oude, and Allahabad. He agreed to pay for the corps, and stipulated for a

¹ Hamilton : Hindustan, i., 309—12.

stronger force, should he require it to defend other parts of his dominions. He shortly applied for this addition, which was furnished; but, in 1779, declared his inability to liquidate the debts he had thus voluntarily incurred. He wished to be relieved of the second brigade; but the Governor-General explained to him that this had been created solely at his desire—that he stood pledged to maintain it—and that his country would infallibly be plunged into anarchy the moment it withdrew. Many concessions were, however, made to him; but Warren Hastings failed in a part of his agreement.

When Lord Cornwallis entered upon the transaction, a friendly settlement was, for the time, effected. He understood clearly that the defence of Oude was now one of the Company's duties—though, unhappily, its internal administration was still left uncontrolled—as it is to this day. Asaph-ul-Dowlah, acceding to the logic of his ally, pledged himself to new engagements in return for the favour which undoubtedly was shown him; but by his indolence, dissipation, and extravagance, constantly embarrassed himself, and broke faith with the Company. He appeared least sensible of the benefits he derived from their protection, when his miserable system of

government rendered his throne so weak that they alone upheld it.¹

War between Great Britain and France did not break out until the last year of Lord Cornwallis's administration. As soon as it commenced, Pondicherry was stormed; and the native princes of India saw, with respect, the rising glories of that power which humbled every enemy within their sight. Their astonishment was no less than their alarm; for they confessed the inferiority which rendered it unsafe for them to contend with such an authority.

But they imagined that the whole resources of Great Britain were already poured out on the shores of India. They knew little of the islands in the distant west, which could arm new hosts and fill fleets with new conquerors for India. Had they known this, and been wise enough to conciliate, instead of assailing, the Company, they might have been independent to this day. Confident skill, however, and presumptuous ignorance are equally fearless. The Indian princes never learned to respect the British power until it shattered their thrones to atoms.

Malcolm : Political History of India.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TRANSACTIONS IN THE DECCAN.

LORD CORNWALLIS was succeeded by Sir John Shore. The condition of India at that period did not promise a long peace; but the English had never been so powerful. Their great enemy, Tippoo, had been vanquished; the state of Hydrabad was bound to them by a solid compact, and the Mahrattas, though jealous and hostile, had not forgotten, in their ambition to overthrow the Company, their respect for its unrivalled arms. Since, however, they possessed two French brigades, under General de Boigne, and were inspired by an unappeasable spirit of rapacity and hatred of the Company, it was unsafe to rest upon their profession.¹

¹ Auber : British Power in India, ii., 138.

Notwithstanding the dangerous influences then working throughout the mass of the independent states of India, no war occurred during the administration of Sir John Shore. Political changes, however, occurred, which it is necessary to follow, that we may understand the origin of many events during the reign of the Marquis Wellesley.

An attempt had been made to arrange between the Nizam and the Peishwa a mutual treaty of guarantee, which should secure to each the territories he possessed on the conclusion of peace at Seringapatam. The Hyderabad prince consented; but at Poonah such a compact was viewed with dislike, since it would throw a shadow over the ambitious visions of the Mahratta power. Ultimately the design failed, and Sir John Shore withdrew from the attempt. The counsels of Sindiah were at this time influential with the Peishwa, who avowed his dream of re-establishing the Mahratta authority throughout India.¹ He insinuated to the Nizam his suspicions of the English, and refused them credit for any purity of motive.² Sindiah did not hide his reliance upon Tippoo, as a counterpoise to the Company's

¹ Malcolm : Political Hist. of India, 145.

² Mallet to Gov. Gen., July, 1794.

power. The object of these princes in engaging in war with Hyderabad was to reduce the strength of the Nizam, to increase their own, and to injure the British Government by depriving it of the advantage it might derive from the alliance of an important state. These views were perfectly legitimate. While they pursued them without perfidy, the Mahrattas had the clearest right to do so. They were contending for the political supremacy of India; but the Company had an equal right to defeat, if possible, their diplomacy and their arms.

The grounds of quarrel between the Mahrattas and the Nizam need not be detailed, since they do not involve any reference to British politics. When events thickened, and war appeared imminent, the Hyderabad prince applied to the Company, which offered its mediation. This the Mahrattas first evaded, then neglected, and though Sindiah in the meanwhile died, prepared to carry on their hostile operations.¹ At the same time, Tippoo once more appeared at the head of an army and threatened the Deccan with those cavalry which, had he employed them as his father did, might have cut to pieces many an

¹ Mill: *British India*, vi., 26.

enemy. Nevertheless, Sir John Shore determined not to aid the Nizam,¹ though it was obvious he must sink under the combined attacks, which would render Mysore more formidable than ever. Happily events set aside the perils which crowded upon the prospect; but if the Company were saved from the loss of reputation and authority, it was not by any spirited or manly policy on the part of the Governor-General.

War speedily broke out between the Mahrattas and the Nizam, who was, at the end of a brief campaign, brought to the feet of his powerful enemies. He acknowledged all their former claims, and, by the treaty of Kurdlah, ceded the fort and district of Dowlatabad, with a territory yielding thirty-five lacs of revenue; agreed to pay three crores of rupees, and put the seal to his humiliation by yielding his Prime Minister, as a hostage, into their hands.² When these transactions had concluded, the young Peishwa suddenly died, and the eldest son of the Nizam rebelled. These events led to the restoration of Hyderabad to its original position among Indian powers. The influence, lately established there, was now entirely lost, and new dangers rose in

¹ Thornton : History of India.

² Malcolm : Political History of India, 171

every quarter upon the Deccan. Every relation between the Company and the Nizam, if not severed, had been so relaxed, that nothing appeared left to him except submission to the Mahrattas, or to Tippoo, when the insurrection of his son, Ali Jah, revived in him the desire to obtain, again, the friendship of the English. Though he had insulted them and entertained their inveterate enemies, he was not ashamed to seek their alliance.

It is just, that when a weak state claims the aid of one more powerful, without being able to plead the merit of former services, it should show that its alliance will be the source of advantage, or, at least, of no loss, and that the favour will be repaid with effectual gratitude. Such was the Athenian maxim.¹ Asiatic princes never denied the principle, when their task was supplication. They sued for aid with promises which they seldom fulfilled, except under compulsion. They would divide the danger, but not the spoil of war. In this spirit, the Prince of Hyderabad appealed to the only sword which could protect him, and pledged his gratitude to repay the obligation. If the English consented

¹ Thucydides, i., 27.

to assist him, it was, of course, to develop their political plans. It would serve no purpose to deny, or to disprove this; for states never, unless in an unrecorded Arcadian age, made treaties, except with the design of acquiring or securing advantages to themselves. If it be charged to the East India Company, that it served the interests of other powers, to promote its own, there is no inducement to deny the imputation. If it be shown, however, that, in pursuing the ends which a dignified ambition held in view, it had regard for the principles of equity, its ample vindication is established. It has even a superior merit, for few rulers allow their conduct to be disciplined by that magnanimous rule. When two states conclude a compact, it is scarcely, indeed, to be expected that a just determination will be fixed upon, if one be more formidable than the other. Equal powers alone enforce equitable treaties.

The English, therefore, were justified in expecting to receive advantages from the Nizam, in return for the aid they gave him; and he was bound to recognise their claim. Nevertheless, he fostered the influence of a French faction, avowedly hostile to the allies. But British ascendency might have been re-established with-

out difficulty, had Sir John Shore been a bold or wise politician. Meanwhile, the division of parties in the Mahratta capital, led to a new treaty with the Nizam, which set aside, in some respect, the disgraceful convention of Kurdlah. The Prime Minister was restored to Hydrabad, the English connection was revived, and the Mahrattas, threatened with an attack from the Mysore, as well as weakened by their domestic conflicts, delayed to break up again the general tranquillity of India.¹

¹ Auber : British Power in India, ii., 145.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

INTERVAL OF PEACE IN INDIA.

In the Carnatic, Mohammed Ali had died, in October, 1795, and was succeeded by Omdut-ul-Omrah,¹ who received an inheritance of anarchy and desolation. The English endeavoured to persuade him to adopt a new arrangement, but he refused their proposal; resolving, he said, to maintain the treaty of 1792. He owed immense sums to the Company; but liquidated them only by delivering over province after province of his unhappy country to those rapacious usurers who completed the havoc which famine and invasion had begun.²

With Oude a new treaty was concluded. A

¹ Mill : British India, vi., 57.

² Penhoen : Empire Anglais.

series of events in that state seemed to promise a final settlement of its relation with the Company; it may be useful to indicate the principal of these, although the country has not yet been included as a province of our empire.

Asaph-ul-Dowlah's kingdom was, in 1794, disturbed by a violent rebellion among the Rohilla Afghans. It was simply a family transaction respecting the succession to a Jaghire; and the English, in accordance with their guarantee, interfered to restore tranquillity. This was effected in a humane and politic manner. In Oude itself, anarchy still continued rampant. Asaph-ul-Dowlah dying, left the throne to his illegitimate son, Vizier Ali, who was recognised as his successor by the British. They were appealed to by Saadut Ali, eldest brother of the late prince, and Sir John Shore at once expressed his belief that this man's claim was just. When he revisited Lucknow in 1798, he found the new ruler to be of spurious birth—hated by the chiefs, and abhorred by the people, who only accepted him through respect to the Company's authority.¹ Of course, it was not for the English to impose on Oude a sovereign, without a claim by birth,²

¹ Malcolm : Political History of India, 199.

² Historical Sketches of the Princes of India, 78.

without a title through his subjects' affection; and the Governor-General resolved to place Saadut Ali upon the Musnud. Little explanation is required to justify this view. Oude was a kingdom subsidiary and tributary to the English. There were two claimants to its throne. One was the son of a menial servant—a debauched, vicious, despotic, sanguinary wretch, not more than seventeen years old, notoriously hostile to them, and strongly suspected of an intention to assassinate the Governor-General.¹ The other was the lawful heir—if the right of succession were allowed—and he appeared, at all events, friendly to them. Besides this, he possessed the most powerful of all suffrages—the favour of the people. Since, therefore, it lay with the English to choose a king, they naturally chose the man most popular in Oude, and least inimical to them. They had, indeed, committed the fault of acknowledging a usurper; but an error on their part did not create a right on his.

Saadut Ali was, therefore, raised in peace to the throne. He signed willingly a treaty fixing the amount of subsidiary; ceding the fortress of Allahabad, agreeing to support the expenses

¹ Auber: British Power in India, ii., 152.

incurred on his behalf, and arranging for the conditional increase of the troops employed in his service.¹

Some transactions of inferior importance, which are not included within the object of this inquiry, occupied the rest of Sir John Shore's administration. In the beginning of 1798, having been raised to the Irish peerage, under the title of Lord Teignmouth, he sailed for England. His career, though not tranquil, had been pacific. The political balance of India, when Lord Teignmouth left it, presented, however, little prospect of continued peace. In the Mysore, Tippoo Sultan, with new strength, with more daring hopes, with undiminished animosity, carried on intrigues with Hyderabad, with the French, and with the Mahrattas. Dowlat Rao Sindiah, now minister, was supreme over the government of Poonah, possessing alarming power, and known to hate the English. The Nizam also had learned to doubt his former allies, and encouraged a French party whose conspiracy could not be viewed without fear. But, in their idolatry of peace, their timid attachment to counsels then styled moderate, and their repudiation of further

¹ Mill : British India, vi., 55.

conquests, the legislators of England had put shackles on their minister in India. It was, perhaps, fortunate. The experiment of neutral policy was tried. The right of that intervention allowed by the common law of Europe, was not enforced; and, in consequence, or, at least, in spite of this course, the materials of war accumulated to a portentous degree. Six years of peace had not, indeed, lessened the power of the Company; but it had increased the power of the Company's enemies. An interregnum of comparative tranquillity had, nevertheless, allowed opportunity for civil reform.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE MARQUIS OF WELLESLEY.

LORD TEIGNMOUTH's unarmed consulate was followed by a long and stormy administration, which converted all India into a theatre of war. In May, 1788, the Earl of Mornington, afterwards the Marquis of Wellesley, arrived as Governor-General. He was sent out solemnly pledged to peace; he was instructed to engage in no hostilities with the native powers; he was prohibited from making any conquests. His mind was animated by that desire.¹ Yet his whole reign was one career of victorious warfare; he carried the British arms against all the most formidable of the Indian princes; he subjugated the whole region from south to north; and threatened to look for

¹ Jenkins : Evidence before the House of Commons.

further trophies beyond the crests of the Hindu Koosh. Still it was the policy of necessity, not of choice. There were circumstances more powerful than the will of Parliament and the wish of its deputed minister. Fortune in the East corrected the policy of England. A catastrophe was inevitable. Lord Wellesley was but the instrument to develop effects, of which the causes were complete long before he set foot in India. He was at the outset launched upon a current which carried him forward irresistibly—and fortunate it was for Great Britain and for the inhabitants of Asia, that the management of their affairs was under the discipline of such a skilful hand.¹

Recommended as he had been by his oratorical talents, which were exercised in the fashionable tone of the day, he proceeded to his seat of government full of the spirit which then animated the ascendant party in England.² If we admit, however, the pernicious nature of those views with reference to the politics of Europe, we shall be unjust if we declare him to have been ignorant of the country which he was about to rule. Various opportunities had already occurred

¹ Captain Thornton : Summary History, 116.

² Mill : British India, vi., 13.

to him for acquainting himself with the affairs of the East,¹ and his conduct would certainly seem to justify the opinion, that he industriously availed himself of them. Far-sighted and judicious, he combined the qualities of vigour and caution, displaying in his whole scheme of public action large views and a just appreciation of the duty he had undertaken to discharge.²

¹ Wilson : Notes to Mill, vi., 73.

² Auber : British Power in India, ii., 180.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CAUSES OF THE LAST WAR WITH TIPPOO.

AMONG the most important achievements of Lord Wellesley was the overthrow of Tippoo Sultan, which destroyed one of the most formidable enemies of the British power, and placed at our mercy one of the most beautiful and salubrious provinces of India.¹ All readers of Asiatic military history remember well, and refer with a sentiment of pride, to the fall of Seringapatam, where the mighty ruler of the Mysore was buried, sword in hand, amid heaps of the slain. Yet all are not familiar with the events that justified the war of which this was the catastrophe. It is one of the episodes of our progress which have been the occasion of the

¹ Buchanan: Journey into the Mysore.

most unqualified condemnation. Let us examine its justice and its policy together, for they are inseparable. Morals alone do not always afford the full ground of justification. In an elevated view of the statesman's duty, nothing is politic which is not just, and nothing is just which is not politic.

The position of the Governor-General was at the confluence of two rival interests. He was to stem them both. To each he owed a duty. It is frequently, indeed, the habit to treat of such men's acts with reference only to one set of their public relations—the native princes whom they humbled or subdued. Writers, however, who lament—often sincerely—over the fallen thrones of the East, forget the paramount obligation imposed by the acceptance of a similar authority in trust. Lord Wellesley and every other Governor-General of India was bound to respect the rights of the Indian princes, to encroach on no weak, to provoke no powerful sovereign, and to hold in view the universal law of nations. But that was not all. There was the territory—there was the commerce—there was the dignity—there was every interest of his own country to defend. Had our empire been acquired by invasion or fraud, it was still his duty to defend

it. It was for the moralist or the historian to condemn the past—it was for the Governor-General to provide against the future. Standing between the native sovereign and the foreign rulers, the alternative of conquest or concession involved an inquiry, whether peace was not more dangerous and more unjust than war. That it would have been so in the case of the last conflict with Tippoo Sultan appears clear from the evidence of history. Lord Wellesley sought no occasion for aggrandizing the Company, or rendering his own fame conspicuous by an unprincipled conduct. Political writers of the very nation engaged in the struggle against us, admit that we were hurried irresistibly into that memorable war, so glorious and so brief, which was crowned by the fall of Seringapatam.¹

On the 8th of June, 1798, not more than three weeks after his arrival at Calcutta, Lord Wellesley's notice was attracted by a sudden apparition of danger rising on the high plains of the Mysore. He received a paper, purporting to be a proclamation issued by the Governor at the Isle of France. It set forth that two envoys had arrived from Tippoo Sultan, a great King of India, with letters to the authorities there, and

¹Xavier Raymond—Dubois de Jancigny : L'Inde, 513.

despatches to the Government of France. They requested an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the French, and requested a supply of troops to carry on war against the English, a war which the Sultan declared himself, as soon as he was sufficiently reinforced, ready at once to commence. The envoys were instructed to offer liberal terms to any volunteers to enrol themselves in his army.¹

Unwilling hastily to credit the perfidy and imprudence of Tippoo Sultan, the Governor-General was at first inclined to treat this as an apocryphal document. Nevertheless, to be prepared for danger, he desired the Commander-in-Chief on the Coromandel coast to consider at once the means of assembling an army in readiness for a movement of defence against the Mysore. His energy was checked by the poverty of spirit of resources at his disposal. Official as well as private information, however, soon arrived, which proved that the proclamation was genuine, and that the whole transaction had been correctly reported. Tippoo had sent two ambassadors from Bangalore to the Isle of France. There they had been liberally enter-

¹ Malcolm : Political Hist. of India, 247.

tained at the public expense; and the proclamation already noticed was published within two days after their arrival. The envoys by no means disavowed the document: on the contrary, they confirmed and exaggerated the magnificent promises it contained. About two hundred persons were induced to follow them. They then embarked in a French frigate, which conveyed them to Bangalore.¹ They were welcomed under the towers of Seringapatam by the Sultan. They founded a Jacobin club, commenced the circulation of their political ideas, and saluted their new friend as Citizen Tippoo.² The tri-colour waved in union with the gaudy symbols of Oriental tyranny. Within that citadel they fostered their designs upon the plains and cities of Bengal—on the site of ancient kingdoms in the south—on the wealthy states in central India; for they had not yet abandoned the hope of rising to eminence, and building up an empire under an Asiatic sun.³ It is not denied that the mind of Tippoo was animated against the English by the bitterest feeling—a compound of hatred and revenge. Disappointed in the pro-

¹ Mill : British India, vi., 75.

² Captain Thornton : Summary History, 117.

³ Heeren : European States and Colonies, ii., 214.

mise of his dreams, with pride humiliated, and heart overflowing with rancour, he was inflamed by the most distant prospect of returning upon his conquerors the injuries he had suffered from them.

The English, meanwhile, had enjoyed an interval of leisure—had consolidated their power—had improved their experience. Tippoo, with a country desolated by war, refused to put reins upon his ambition, that the people might at least enjoy the advantages of peace. While he, therefore, brooded over the design of once more illumining the Deccan with flames, and perhaps ravaging the rice-levels of Bengal, his enemies grew more formidable, and consequently more hateful in his sight. Hostilities were raging between them and their ancient rivals, the French, whose influence had long been established at the Court of the Sultan, as well as the councils of the Nizam. Nothing then was wanting to urge him upon war, but the means of prosecuting it with hope of success.¹

It is asserted by the enemies of the Company that he had not, and never could have had, any chance of success. It is therefore inferred that

¹ Mill—Thornton : History of India.

he would never have commenced operations, History, however, has shown this to be a useless argument. Had he a prospect of final victory when he ravaged the Carnatic? Had the Sikhs any chance of success when they crossed the Sutlej to drive the British out of India? Have not numerous princes in the East assaulted our power without a shadow of reasonable hope? Their efforts were vain, because we did not affect to despise their power, but met them always at the gate. It is further laid down, that the war was not just because it was not necessary, and that it was not necessary because Tippoo Sultan was too weak to put his threats into execution, and the French were unable to aid him.¹ Now, it would be ridiculous to imagine that the rancour of the Mysore sovereign would ever have abated; that he would have become less strong while peace allowed him to accumulate resources; that his ambition would have diminished while his power increased. Confessedly it would have delayed only until armed with sufficient force. Time alone was necessary to strengthen his hands. While he existed, consequently, the English were continually in peril;² and it was

¹ Mill : British India, vi., 91.

² Sir John Munro—Auber.

not just to this country to allow a treacherous enemy the means of preparing at leisure to become a dangerous assailant. Tippoo was then actually taking up arms. It is quite gratuitous to imagine his policy would have checked his design. He had not exhibited that profound or cautious spirit. His character was essentially rash. A Japanese arrogance, indeed, was marked in his whole demeanour.

Timidity is a poor provider. When an invader had again appeared at the gates of Madras, after wasting the Carnatic with fire and sword, what but a barren field would have remained to our arms, even if speedily victorious? The Sultan, it is confessed, was our enemy. But he was weak. Would it have been creditable to wait until he was strong, when he had solicited alliance with a hostile power with the avowed purpose of attacking us? The French were not in a condition to aid him. Were operations, then, unnecessary till they should be in that condition?¹ Wellesley, however, had, I believe, by no means overrated the danger of Tippoo's design, or

¹ Wilson: Notes to Mill, vi., 90.

the influence of the French over his counsils.¹

Men are still living who remember the miraculous explosion of public spirit—the growth of energy—the universal impulse to war—the sudden brightening of their arms which encouraged the French people at that period. The whole country was one enormous camp, and every city was an army where iron continually glowed on the forge to be beaten into swords and pikes for a struggle with the powers of Europe.² Already they had turned their faces towards the East. They had poured an army upon the high road to India. Nearly two hundred sail had been bent from Toulon; an English squadron had fled from the roads of Alexandria; and twenty thousand men had defiled before Napoleon on the sands of Egypt. The fierce and martial cavalry of the Mamelukes, and a multitude of Arab horse, were beaten at the foot of the Pyramids; and but for the blow which shattered their navy at the mouth of the Nile, the French might have swept the whole valley, and shut up the modern gate-

¹ Auber: British Power in India, ii., 190.

² Lamartine: Histoire des Girondins.

way of the East. It is by no means improbable that Buonaparte contemplated opening this route at the point of the sword. His was an audacious ambition, and no prospect could allure him more persuasively than the idea of rivalling the exploits of Alexander beyond the waves of the Hyphasis. To such minds the danger disappears in the magnitude of the object desired. Napoleon's pleasing hope had been to secure for his faithful legions a free encampment in the spacious plains of Asia, and it is at least certain that he communicated to Tippoo Sultan his design of aiding him against the British. He wrote thus:—

“ *To Tippoo Sahib.—Buonaparte, Member of the National Institute and Commander-in-Chief.*”

“ You have already learned that I have arrived on the shores of the Red Sea, at the head of an innumerable and invincible army, burning with desire to free you from the iron yoke of England. I seize this occasion of expressing my wish to learn from you, by way of Muscat and Mocha, the circumstances of your political position. I even desire that you would send to Suez or Cairo

some persons with sufficient ability, and strong enough in your confidence, to treat with me. May the Almighty give you glory, and destroy your enemies!"¹

It was not, therefore, through dread of a chimera, that politicians saw the necessity of guarding India against the designs of France. Its invasion was a favourite plan with Napoleon. There is, indeed, little doubt that he dreamed of sleeping in the imperial palaces of Agra and Delhi, as he dreamed of sleeping in the Kremlin at Moscow, or, as the Turk dreamed of feeding his cavalry under the dome of St. Peter's. What he had the genius to design he might have had the genius to accomplish, had timidity reigned in the councils of England, had Nelson not shivered his fleet to atoms at Aboukir, and other heroes cut his armies to pieces in various fields in Europe. It was vigour in war which checked him, not a servile worship of peace.

Another means by which Tippoo became formidable to our countrymen in India, has not been noticed by many of the historians. It was his attempt to excite disaffection and rebellion

L40. ¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, iv., 332.

among the Mohammedan natives in the British provinces—subjects of our Government.¹ That alone was sufficient justification of a war. Nor was the Sultan of the Mysore alone among our enemies in Asia. Zeman Shah, of Eastern Persia, stood in a threatening attitude upon the mountains of the north-east, and Tippoo sent an envoy to solicit his alliance against their common foe.² The hostile designs of the implacable prince were undoubted, and are not denied by the foreign judges of our policy.³ Neither was the Mysore without military resources. Of an army of nearly eighty thousand men, thirty thousand were in or about Seringapatam, and the whole of them were efficient, and well provided with guns and equipment.⁴ There was, consequently, every ground for action. There was an aggregate of offences on the enemy's part. There were proofs of design—there was evidence of malice—there were tokens of rapacious ambition. There was power in his arms—there was genius in his mind. Many great nations in Europe have kindled up the flames of battle upon trifling

¹ Walter Hamilton : Hindustan, ii., 359.

² Beatson : View of the Origin of the War.

³ Sprengel : Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sahib—Historical View.

⁴ Captain Malcolm : Wellesley Despatches—Wilson.

punctilio and points of etiquette, no less undefinable than worthless;¹ but here was dignity in the cause of alarm, importance in the foe, and significance in the grounds of quarrel.

The Governor-General lost no time in conveying to the Directors his unqualified opinion, that these acts amounted to nothing less than a public, peremptory, and unambiguous declaration of war, and that justice combined with policy to demand an immediate attack upon Tippoo Sultan.² Arrangements were now made with the Nizam at Hyderabad to disband the corps officered by Frenchmen, which was in his employ, and to this he consented with less reluctance, because disgusted by their conduct.³ These officers also had been in league with Tippoo Sultan against the English.⁴ The co-operation, or at least the neutrality of the Prince of the Deccan being thus secured, proceedings were taken to put the army on a more efficient war-footing.⁵ All these measures, however, were simply defensive, while Tippoo was notoriously engaged in strengthening himself for an

¹ Burke : *Regicide Peace, Works*, viii., 189.

² Wellesley : Minute, 12th Aug., 1798.

³ Captain Thornton : *Summary History*, 118.

⁴ Cockburn : Letter to Colebrooke—Auber.

⁵ Thornton : *History of India*.

attack, as well by military arrangements as by negotiations with the neighbouring Mahratta state.¹

Up to the 8th of November, 1798, the Governor-General continued to write in friendly terms to Tippoo Sultan. On that day, however, when the treachery and hostility of the great adventurer could no longer be denied, he wrote to him expressing his uneasiness. He said it was impossible the Sultan could suppose him ignorant of the recent transactions, of the correspondence with the French, of the designs publicly avowed, and the treacherous plot laid with the ancient and inveterate enemies of Great Britain. Still, however, he desired peace. He wished to renew their relations on a foundation of amity. He proposed to depute Major Doveton as envoy to explain the grounds upon which a good understanding might be preserved. On the 16th of next month, he wrote again, claiming a reply. The proud, implacable monarch could not consent to forego his scheme of overwhelming the English power. His pride would not allow him to submit; his hatred would not listen to the language of conciliation.

¹ Wilson : Notes to Mill, vi., 91.

Danger opened before, but humiliation lay behind him, and vanity joined with shame to urge him to his own destruction. The destiny of his house, the arms of France, and a league among the princes of northern India, would carry him through the crisis.¹ He passed without notice the substance of the letter—he refused the explanations—he evaded the requests.² The object of his temporising was clearly, by the admission of French writers, to gain time; that is, strength.³ While he corresponded with the English, professing friendship, he negotiated with other powers the terms of an alliance against them.⁴ He said the volunteers were strangers who had arrived in search of employment, which he granted to a few, and he feigned astonishment at the fears of the Governor-General.⁵

¹ Captain Thornton : *Summary History*, 121.

² *Historical Sketches of the Princes of India*, 63.

³ Dubois de Jancigny—Xavier Raymond : *L'Inde*, 512.

⁴ Auber : *British Power in India*, ii., 173.

⁵ Mill : *British India*, vi., 108.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

NEW INVASION OF TIPPOO'S DOMINIONS.

THOUGH this was palpable deceit, Lord Wellesley, to remove all chance of doubt, wrote to explain the cause of his apprehension. He described, with a minuteness which probably astonished the Sultan, all the transactions that had recently taken place in the Isle of France. He thereupon charged him with concluding with the French an offensive alliance against Great Britain and her allies—with demanding military succour, and levying troops for the purpose of making war on the Government without provocation. He was thus accused with systematically breaking the treaty of peace and friendship which he had signed under the walls of Seringapatam. Nevertheless, Lord Wellesley again

offered to send the envoy on a mission of amity. On the 16th, he once more wrote, enclosing a letter from the Grand Seignior, with that monarch's declaration of war against the French. It was represented to him, that as a faithful follower of the Prophet, he could not hold alliance with a race which was in arms against the head of his religion. Peace was pressed upon him. Nothing was heard until the 13th of February, 1794, when the following singular letter was received, undated :—

“ I have been much gratified by the agreeable receipt of your Lordship’s two friendly letters,—the first brought by a camel-man, the last by Hurkarus—and understood their contents. The letter of the Prince, in station like Muschid, with angels as his guards—with troops numerous as the stars—the sun illuminating the world of the heaven of empire and power—the luminary giving splendour to the universe of the firmament of glory and dominion—the Sultan of the sea and land, the King of Rum—may his power be perpetual!—addressed to me, which reached me through the British envoy, and which you transmitted, has arrived. Being frequently disposed to make excursions and hunt, I am

accordingly proceeding upon a hunting trip. You will be pleased to despatch Major Doveton —about whose coming your friendly pen has frequently written—slightly attended. Always continue to gratify me by friendly letters notifying your welfare.”¹

Tippoo was now inclined to repent the imprudence which had discovered his designs to the English. He trembled for the safety of his crown, and hoped to gain time by accepting the mission of Major Doveton. He made a reluctant movement eastward,² to effect that object. But it was clear to Lord Wellesley, as it is now clear to nearly all students of history, that such an arrangement would simply serve to allow the Sultan a whole year to complete the plan and preparations for his design. The monsoon was approaching, and in June would prevent all military operations. He, therefore, ordered the armies to advance, and wrote to Tippoo Sultan, saying that the time was past when an arrangement could be negotiated on the old ground; that his long neglect and repeated refusal of offers of accommodation left no other policy

¹ Penhoen: *Empire Anglais*, iv., 342.

² Thornton: *History of India*.

open; but that General Harris was still empowered to listen to terms of peace.¹

The object of the Governor-General, when he first designed an attack on the territories of the Sultan, was extremely moderate. He intended to force the cession of the remaining Malabar provinces—to cut off the last means of communication between Tippoo and the French—to exact indemnification for the expenses entailed by his armament, and insist on an English resident being entertained at Seringapatam.² To these terms he adhered even after the war became more imminent; and he is not charged with rapacity on their account.³ Another circumstance proved to Tippoo—to the rest of India—to Europe, and to all posterity, that Lord Wellesley was not that unprincipled devotee to the lust of territorial aggrandizement which he is represented to have been. There was among the Ghauts, on the borders of Malabar, a small district called Wynnaad. It was held by the British ; but its possession was disputed by the Sultan. Lord Wellesley ordered an inquiry into the antagonistic claims. He satis-

¹ Malcolm : Political History of India.

² Wilson : Notes to Mill, vi., 91.

³ Mill : British India, 110

fied himself that the right was with Tippoo, and immediately delivered WynAAD to him.¹

General Harris was not disabled by his instructions from offering terms to the Sovereign of Mysore; and arrangements were made to profit by the last chance of peace. While, however, the English chased this fleeting hope, Tippoo prepared a new embassy to France. Three times, therefore, had a mission been attempted ; but he refused to slacken his preparations for a conflict. It had been felt by Lord Wellesley, and afterwards acknowledged by the East India Company as well as by Parliament, that the Sultan was an implacable enemy, who could only be rendered harmless by being crippled. More severe conditions were consequently laid before him ; the cession of his maritime possessions, to cut off the French—an equal grant of territory to each of the allies, on their respective frontiers, amounting to about one-fourth of his country, and payment of a crore and a-half of rupees. Should he force them to push the campaign until he again cried quarter under the walls of Seringapatam, the price of forbearance should be made far more heavy. Half his dominions should be

¹ Auber : British Power in India, ii., 180.

divided between the English, the Nizam, and the Mahrattas. Two crores of rupees should be paid as compensation for the expense of the undertaking. Tippoo should relinquish his claims to all disputed places on the frontiers. He should dismiss from his Court all Europeans belonging to any nation at war with the English. He should receive an ambassador from each of the allies, keep an envoy at their Courts, and yield certain forts and hostages in pledge for his good faith.¹ No mitigation of these penalties could now be allowed. He must submit or accept the arbitration of that sword which he forced our countrymen to unsheathe, since he had proved his resolve to lavish all, even to his last resource, upon war.² To this stern determination Lord Wellesley was driven by the uncompromising hostility of the Sultan.³ The Sultan refused, and two armies advanced upon his capital.

¹ Mill : British India, vi., 112.

² Wilson : Notes to Mill, vi., 110.

³ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, iv., 345.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CONQUEST AND PARTITION OF MYSORE.

THE history of the campaign is to be looked for in the general history of India. It was conducted by the English with the utmost humanity and honour. The narrative is full of dramatic interest; but the result is all we have to deal with.

On the 4th of May, 1799, the walls of Seringapatam gave way before a storm of metal hailed upon them from the English batteries—the ramparts were carried by assault—Tippoo Sultan died sword in hand—and the citadel of his empire fell into our power.¹ The Mysore itself was at our mercy. It was accordingly divided

¹ Wilks : Historical Sketches.

between the allies, and a Rajah whom the English chose to set up under their protection.

All the territory possessed by the Sultan on the low, jungly, hot, yet woody, coast of Malabar, with its fertile valleys, its multitude of rivers, and barren hills, where a curious race of people is scattered—not in villages, but in isolated habitations—all this which had suffered direly under the oppression of Tippoo, was annexed to the English dominions. They also appropriated the pleasant, beautiful, and valuable province of Coimbatore, with the populous city of Daraporam ; the tracts lying between the British provinces on the western and those on the eastern coast; the forts and posts commanding the principal passes on the rocky plateau above the Ghauts; the district of Wynnaad, celebrated for producing the best cardamums in India,¹ and the fortress, island and city of Seringapatam.

The districts of Gooty, Gurrum-condah, and the great tract running above the line of forts—Chittledroog, Sern, Rundidroog, and Colar—not, however, including those strongholds, were granted to the Nizam. They yielded a revenue equal to that afforded by the portions which the English reserved for themselves.¹

¹ Hamilton : Hindustan, ii., 293.

The Mahrattas had neglected altogether to aid in the campaign. It would consequently have been just to exclude them entirely from the partition of Tippoo's dominions; but Lord Wellesley was not desirous of creating bitterness among them, or inflaming their jealousy of the Nizam. Let it be conceded that this was an act, not of liberality, but of prudence. He assigned them Harpanoolley, Soonda above the Ghauts, Annagondy, and some other districts, with part of the territory, but not the fortifications, of Chittledroog and Bednore. These amounted to half, or two-thirds, of the acquisitions made by themselves.¹

There still remained a territory, yielding a revenue of thirteen lacs of pagodas. It was confined on the north by a formidable line of hill fortresses, offering a barrier against the Mahrattas and the Nizam, and surrounded on the three other sides by the dominions of the Company. This country was assigned as a demesne to a descendant of the ancient Rajahs,² Khrisna, a child only a few years old, whose mild tender face was a wonderful contrast to the huge,

¹ Mill: British India, vi., 162.

² Historical Sketches of the Princes of India, 63.

lowering countenance of Tippoo.¹ It was, however, only the shadow of a throne. The sovereignty over the region was British, and if we condemn any feature in Lord Wellesley's policy, it is the creation of a prince without power—except to oppress his country, and without dignity, because the conditions of his instalment were that he was to be uncrowned at the will of the Company. A wiser and more manly course would have been to annex the whole territory; since, by the fortunes of a just war, it had been wrested from the hands of its previous sovereign.² That the arrangement was made to win the praise of moderation is probably true; but that it was adapted to hide from the Mahrattas and the Nizam the true extent to which the English had aggrandized themselves, it appears absurd to believe; neither the Nizam nor the Mahratta ruler was a child to be blinded by such a deception.

The family and the adherents of Tippoo were regarded with a liberality and kindness which extort praise even from the Benthamite critic of British policy.³

¹ Buchanan's Journey : Portrait.

² Penhoen : Empire Anglais, iv., 345.

³ Mill : British India, vi., 166.

One source of danger was now dried up. It was, perhaps, fortunate for humanity that Tippoo Sultan blindly pursued his course of aggressions upon the East India Company. Nothing short of his destruction could have insured safety to the neighbouring states. He hovered continually about them, ready to pour down his fierce cavalry, and desolate the lands below; he was "like Fabius, the black cloud that lowers on the tops of the mountains, and like Scipio, the thunderbolt of war."¹ Tranquillity was a vain hope while he had the power to destroy it. No peace could be preserved with a nation habitually in arms, or with an adventurer who found his only pride on the field of battle.² Tippoo was renowned in India as his father Hyder had been—the scourge and curse of all who came in the way of his armies. He made famine in full harvest time; he brooded over schemes of havoc in the very bosom of peace; he perjured his soul while signing a pledge of faith, and all his trophies were gathered from scenes of carnage, terrible even to a soldier's eye. Charity may term his rapacity ambition, his insolence pride, his perfidy a

¹ Burke : *Regicide Peace, Works*, viii., 370.

² Heeren : *European States and Colonies*, ii., 214.

yearning for independence; but the historian has vainly wasted his rhetorical art in endeavouring to shade down the black character of this Oriental tyrant.¹ We may compassionate his fate; we may admire him as an adventurer of remarkable abilities; we may confess his courage; but we can never respect him as a good or a great man.² Still less can we sympathise with him in the disappointment of his hopes, and the humiliation of his pride, unless we lament the success of our own countrymen; for the triumph of the one was impossible without the annihilation of the other.³

¹ Mill: British India, vi., 153.

² Wilson: Notes to Mill, vi., 154.

³ Tippoo was intolerant to all vices but his own. He was a rigid censor of manners; yet allowed no sanctuary to protect the victims he had marked for the prey of his gross and inveterate passions. He robbed even the Brahmins of their most beautiful daughters, and, when weary of them, if he did not stain his couch or his divan with their blood, dismissed them to live in pollution, alien from their parents, and outcasts from all their friends.—*Buchanan*, i., 5. 56.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

POLICY OF THE WAR.

THE justification of this memorable and important campaign, which resulted in the conquest and formation of an extensive empire, is contained, then, in these facts—

That Tippoo Sultan, by a solemn pledge, engaged himself to peace with the English, and promised to refrain from aggressions, either on them or their allies; that he broke his faith by begging assistance from France, with the declared purpose of making war upon them; that he persisted in repeating that offence, after denying that it had been committed; that he conspired with Zeman Shah to invade their dominions; that he sent a mission, with the same object, to the Grand Seignior; that he plotted against the

Company with French officers in the service of the Nizam; that he endeavoured, in contempt of the Common Law of Nations, and a positive treaty, to excite disaffection and rebellion among British subjects; that he refused all explanation of his conduct, and behaved contumaciously when summoned to afford it.

These were the actual grounds of charge against him. There were others, unsusceptible of actual proof, but not less morally certain, which redoubled, though they were not needed to complete, the justification of the war. Therefore, in an ethical light, this first achievement of Lord Wellesley appears to have been an honourable use of power.

The morality of the war being thus established, its policy is equally evident. The moderation of Lord Cornwallis left Tippoo the means of disturbing India, and no historian, of any party, denies that he was animated by that desire. He waited only for a favourable occasion. His army was perpetually increased; European officers were continually taken into his pay; he never ceased adding to his stores of arms, ammunition, and the other necessaries of war. He had invoked the aid of France. Napoleon had encouraged him, in grandiloquent terms, to

break the yoke of England ; representing himself at the head of a countless and unconquerable army, ready, like another Pharaoh, to pass the Red Sea, and land on the shores of India. Zeman Shah hung like a cloud in the north-east, and the passes of Afghanistan threatened to disgorge a host of fierce marauders upon the fertile plains of Hindustan. Besides, one could calculate the influence which a Mohammedan power might exert on the populations of the British provinces, which Tippoo sought to excite against their Christian rulers.

It was, consequently, left for the Governor-General to choose between waiting until these accumulating dangers had combined ; until the timid had become courageous, until the wavering had become resolved, until the weak had become formidable—or, striking immediately at an enemy who was wholly undisguised, and creating, by his fall, a warning to the powers preparing to rise against us. Without being driven, therefore, to search in the recesses of a delicate and subtle policy for the motive to this war, it appears justified by the plainest evidence of reason.

CHAPTER XL.

PERILS OF BRITISH INDIA.

It may be necessary here to notice more fully the designs of Zeman Shah, King of the Abdallee, or Afghan tribes. He had succeeded to his father Timur, son of Ahmed, in 1792, and held sway over a considerable dominion. It extended south to the mouth of the Indus, on the north to the parallel of Kashmere; on the east it commenced beyond Attock, and spread to the Persian Tarshish. Three years before the fall of Seringapatam a host of Zeman's cavalry appeared at Lahore, terrifying, not only the Mahrattas, but the British Government also. The Sikhs in the country of the Five Rivers were by no means inclined to obstruct his march; the state of Poonah would have been unable; the gallant

Rohilla bands might have sallied from their cities among the hills, ridden under his flag, and levelled their spears in the van of his army.¹ They could have no sentiment of friendship towards the English, who had spoiled them of their independence, and sold them to a vile oppressor.

The design entertained by Zeman Shah was that of restoring his house to power, and erecting the standard of the Prophet once more supreme in the empire of the Great Mogul.

This purpose he distinctly declared to Lord Wellesley, claiming the aid of the English and the Nizam to rescue Shah Alum from the Mahrattas, and reinstate him on the throne of Delhi.² No doubt can be entertained that he seriously brooded over the idea;³ and they who remember the frequent occasions in which Afghanistan—the gate and citadel of India—has given a passage to its invaders, will not refuse to attach importance to such a danger. The threatened descent of King Zeman must not, therefore, be forgotten in a consideration of the causes which led to the Mysore war.

¹ Thornton : History of India.

² Wellesley : Despatches.

³ Elphinstone : Kabul.

Policy, without the aid of armies, removed this danger. Captain Malcolm, a distinguished member of a distinguished family, proceeded on embassy to Persia, and an advantageous treaty was concluded with the King.¹

Lord Wellesley reached India in May, 1798. In May, 1799, he had subjugated one of the most powerful kingdoms in the East. His whole career was one magnificent series of conquests.

¹ See Malcolm: *Sketches of Persia*.

CHAPTER XLI.

ADMINISTRATION OF LORD WELLESLEY.

THE English had now become the imperial people of Asia. From that time pure considerations of policy added weight to the justification of their conquests. Their empire was an accomplished fact. Not even the severest judge of their conduct could hope or desire to see them abdicate the supremacy they had obtained. It was against the extension, not the existence, of an authority, that men thenceforward inveighed, for no argument could now go beyond the date of its foundation.

Struggles could not fail to arise, while India was occupied by more than one power, capable of contesting the throne of paramount authority.

The intervals between one war and another were only truces; for that cannot be called peace between states, when the stipulations of the treaty remain unfulfilled, and the mutual feelings of hostility unabated. The English, therefore, could never safely relapse from the attitude of defence. Some of their great enemies, indeed, were crushed. Hyder Ali lay with Tippoo in the noble mausoleum he had erected for the reception of his ashes:¹ others, however, still remained to speculate on the changes and chances of fortune. Mighty adventurers had arisen to carve out empires with the sword. Dreams of wide and splendid dominion absorbed their minds, and no scheme of ambition could unfold itself, even to their fancy, which did not include the ruin of the strange power, built up by wandering merchants from another hemisphere. The statesman, therefore, who assumed the trust of administering the Company's territories, undertook a task which, successfully to accomplish, required all the courage and policy that could be united in a single man.

The relations which had grown up between the Company and various native princes, could no

¹ Captain Thornton: Summary History, 133.

longer be severed. They were the main roots which bound it to the soil, and might prove the sources of prosperity or the causes of disaster, according to the policy which influenced them. Lord Teignmouth had comprehended this, and laboured to establish a solid basis upon which all future negotiations might be grounded. That a permanent settlement could not be secured, it needed no prophetic perception to foresee, since one party to the contract was an Asiatic prince.

With respect especially to Oude, in northern India, the late Governor-General had concluded many arrangements, which satisfied the British Cabinet.¹ Ever since the peace between Lord Clive and Sujah-a-Dowlah, 1765, that country had been protected against invasion abroad and rebellion at home by the British army. Warren Hastings had, by the subjugation of Rohilcund, incurred for himself and his nation a blot of infamy which no time can obliterate, no rhetoric conceal. The reigning Nawab had been placed on the throne by the same allies, and a heavy debt was accumulated against him. The sub-

¹ Papers presented in 1806.

sidiary was in perpetual arrears, and dreadful crimes were committed in gathering the revenue.¹ When Lord Wellesley arrived, anarchy of the most terrible kind afflicted Oude, and its prince's liabilities constantly increased, for he never ceased demanding assistance.² The Governor-General early took these affairs into consideration, and proposed a plan for their settlement. He desired to secure a cession of territory in liquidation of the debt, and replace the Nawab's predatory troops by a British contingent.³

Nor was peace ever needed more. Wide tracts of land, once green with varied cultivation, flourishing and populous, lay in the solitude of death. In vivid contrast was displayed the fortunate province contiguous on the east, where returning tranquillity induced the peasant to plough the fields, and the security of law invited him to gather in the fruits of summer. Beyond lay a desert the more dreary, because touched by the sad traces of a happier time. Signs were visible where the soil had been tilled; hillocks of broken brick showed where villages had

¹ Thornton: History of India.

² Malcolm: Political History of India, 229.

³ Mill: British India, vi., 169.

stood on rising grounds; but the tenants of these mournful ruins had fled, leaving alone memorials of the industry which had lent beauty to the face of this deserted plain.¹

The threatened invasion of the Afghans, distinctly announced by their sovereign, Zeman Shah,² who had once, indeed, advanced to the region of the Five Rivers,³ made this an affair of policy. The ravages committed by the military banditti of Oude made it an affair of humanity. An insurrection, which broke out under the defeated usurper, made it an affair of necessity. Vizier Ali, endeavouring to seize the throne, commenced operations by a massacre, and raised his rebellious standard. The Nawab had no confidence in his own troops. He prayed that the English would protect him, but when called on to join with his forces in the campaign, he refused, representing them as neither by their discipline nor their fidelity available to any purpose. He, therefore, threw upon the English the whole burden of the war. His kingdom was thrown into a state of trepidation and alarm; but Marquis Wellesley crushed the rebels, and

¹ Sir John Anstruther—Auber.

² Wilson: Notes to Mill, vi., 179.

³ Thornton : History of India.

proceeded with an increase of right to press on the Nawab a reform of his administration.

The prince was requested to disband the large, useless, and expensive army, which he had himself asserted to be useless even for the defence of his throne. He was required to pay for the troops which he had declared could alone save him in his extremity.¹ The treaty which installed him, bound him to support the contingent, however large it was necessary to make it. If he refused, it was not that he was poor. A full revenue, wrung with horrid violence from an impoverished people, accumulated in his coffers.² He left at his death a vast revenue in gold, the price of much innocent blood.³ Still he temporised; still the English waited while the gathering seditions among the people threatened him with overthrow.

The Company, bound by treaty to defend him while he was faithful to his engagements, could not assure the safety of his kingdom, unless a considerable force was posted on the frontier. The profound peace which has been spoken

¹ Mill: History of British India, vi., 168.

² Thornton: History of India.

³ Historical Sketches of the Princes of India, 79.

of,¹ does not appear to have existed. The tranquillity which continues while the materials of war are accumulating, is no more than the sultry calm which, under the torrid zone, precedes a storm. There were formidable enemies waiting for an occasion to take up arms, and a vulnerable point in the territories of the Company or a dependent ally would have invited their attack. The English, moreover, were pledged for the debts of this selfish prince,² who was, in reality, dependent upon them, much more than any of his ancestors had been upon the Mohammedan Empire—though that was an acknowledged subjection.

Oude was thus a part of their dominions. It could not wisely be left a source of weakness instead of strength. Its ruler existed by the forbearance and protection of the Company. To withdraw their armies would have been to overthrow him; and the Mahrattas were ever hovering on the watch. To insure the safety of the province, moreover, they must command its resources; for, while disorganized, these were not only useless, but injurious.³ The bold course

¹ Mill : British India.

² Historical Sketches of the Princes of India, 79.

³ Wilson : Notes to Mill, vi., 261.

would have been to have assumed at once the government of Oude. Nor is this an unprincipled theory. In a region where native governors exercised rule only by the right of power, he had no claim to a throne who was not equal to its support. A prince also, who was set up by the English, and supported by them, could only deserve to be upheld while he fulfilled the designs of government. They who had installed him were bound, as well by the laws of nature, as by that laboriously expounded by Grotius, to see that a vile tyranny was not practised under their protection. This the Company has not done. It has been guilty of upholding a hateful despotism which blights the country as with a moral pestilence, and prostitutes the British sword to the oppression of a miserable people. From that charge it has no way to escape. It is melancholy to reflect on the long course of suffering, unmitigated to this day, which might have been spared to that unhappy people had Saadut Ali been then dethroned. Fewer words and more decided action would then have surrounded with more lustre the Governor-General's name.¹ The remark is true that, as many English politicians

¹ See Wellesley's Minutes and Despatches.

are too fond of oratory, many Indian statesmen have been too fond of writing.

At length, the pending dispute was settled. The Nawab ceded, in liquidation of his debt, Bareilly, a level, well-watered province of Delhi, famous for its perfumed rice;¹ the moist and fertile tracts of Moradabab; the flat lands of the Lower Doab, with its tamarind and mango trees; the district and the town of Farruckabad, or "the Happy Abode," which was then notorious for the murders and burglaries committed in the open day amid its streets; the splendid territories of Allahabad, with the celebrated diamond mines, and the district of Caunpoor, Gorruckpoor, Almighur and others. It was then also that the English made late atonement to the fruitful vale of Rohilcund, by releasing it from the pestilent tyranny of Oude, and receiving it under their own protection.² Our territory was thus interposed between the Nawab and all his enemies.³

¹ Hamilton : *Hindustan*, i., 433.

² Mill : *British India*, vi., 245.

³ Malcolm : *Political History*, 324.

CHAPTER XLII.

POLITICS OF THE CARNATIC.

THE final assumption of the Carnatic is now to be explained. It has been assailed by many writers. It long afforded a topic to the itinerant philanthropists of England, and an occupation to needy hirelings, with more ability than principle, who undertook to blacken their own countrymen for a salary from an Indian despot. It was laboriously misrepresented.¹ It was long vexed, and often revived in prolix dissertations.² It has been stigmatized by a German historian as a revolting transaction.³ Was it justifiable? To me, clearly, and by the

¹ Hist. and Man. of E.I.C.

² Instructions of the Nawab to his Agent.

³ Heeren : European States and Colonies, ii., 215.

simplest course of argument, upon the double ground of expedience and equity.

It had long been evident, and was never denied, that the affairs of the Carnatic must, in one way or another, be settled, to save the country from utter and irredeemable ruin. It was literally rotting through disorganization.

Before the final struggle with Tippoo, a treaty had been concluded, by which the Nawab of the Carnatic gave to the Company, in the event of war, the whole administration of his country, with the exception of certain Jaghires. When the Mysore King drew his sword, Wellesley refrained from exercising his undoubted right, and represented to the Nawab the Company's earnest wish that he should so reform his government as to render further interference unnecessary.¹ It is to be recollectcd, that he had never been a sovereign prince. Originally, the Carnatic was subject to the Deccan, which was subject to the Great Mogul. The English succeeded to the authority of Delhi, and when he ceased to be dependent on the Deccan, it was by the act of the English, and he became dependent on them. The dispute lay, therefore, not between two

¹ Mill: British India, vi., 301.

equal powers, but between a supreme and a tributary government. At various times, indeed, the Company had flattered his pride with the style of sovereign, which it was unwise, if not unjust to do, since it encouraged him in neglecting his engagements.¹

By the maladministration of the Carnatic, the Nawab had amply proved his incapacity or his wickedness. If he was imbecile, he must have fallen, unless supported by the English, which showed that he was morally dependent on them. If he was bad as a man, rather than weak as a governor, they had either to aid in his tyranny, or to force him to reform. In either case, their support of him was conditional upon his conduct.

There was between him and the English a formal compact. There was between him and his people that unwritten treaty, the infringement of which by the governor releases the governed from allegiance. He was not only subjecting the Company to loss, and hurrying himself to ruin; he was plunging the country in misery, aggravated by every act of his administration. The magnificent castles of the chiefs who were his subordinates in despotism,

¹ Wilson : Notes to Mill, vi., 328.

stood amid landscapes, with all their original beauty effaced by the havoc made by oppression, with all their exuberant wealth wasted by anarchy. The fields were ravaged, the houses fell in ruins, the temples were deserted. Villages and walled cities alike were desolated by the pestilence of this wretched tyranny, and famine did its work near the granary of India. Not by nature a fertile country, refreshed by few streams, and only by short seasons of rain, its chief product is rice, which requires a perennial irrigation. In earlier and happier ages, innumerable reservoirs had been made, formed of mounds of earth and stone, with sluices of solid masonry, built by the ambition of benevolence, which created a work of art, to use the influences of heaven.¹ These had been so destroyed or injured, that the sources of plenty had been dried up, while still extortion preyed on the poor millions of the Carnatic. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, their misfortunes appeared complete.²

Besides misgoverning his country to this extent, the Nawab deliberately broke the treaty by making assignments of revenue on the

¹ Burke : Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts, iv., 286.

² Malcolm : Political History, 333

districts which formed a guarantee for the Company's debt. This was in violation, not of the evident spirit only, but of the express letter, of the written contract. However, the Governor-General offered to sacrifice much, if a fair portion of the debt were settled, and proposed that a certain amount of territory should be set aside for the purpose.¹ The districts thus indicated, were already mortgaged to the Company; but their revenues were fraudulently misappropriated by the Nawab.² Nothing could be more liberal than the arrangement offered. If the territory produced more than the regular annual instalment agreed upon, they would grant the whole surplus to him. If it yielded less, they would bear all the loss.

The Nawab refused these terms. He haughtily declined to accept any modifications in the old treaty. As he adhered to it so pertinaciously, the Company had nothing left but to insist upon its direct fulfilment.³ He swore to abide by it, as by a solemn contract, inherited from his father, to which he was pledged by every sacred consideration of piety, honour, and policy; but

¹ Thornton : History of India.

² Mill : British India, vi., 305.

³ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, iv., 424.

at the same time, he made a further claim for a share in the divided empire of the Mysore—he who was unable to govern what he had—a land cursed by the rule of a cruel and feeble tyrant. The whole correspondence exhibits, on the part of the English, a desire to win the praise of faith and moderation; and, on his part, an endeavour to evade his duty.¹ At the same time, it is true that Lord Wellesley protracted the negotiation by his prolix despatches; endeavouring to set before the Nawab more justifications of the course pursued towards him than were needed.²

During the war of the English with Tippoo Sultan, in 1799, the Nawab had acted towards us as an enemy, not as a friend. When supplies were collecting for the army, his officers not only neglected to assist, but obstructed that service. A proposal was made to him, that he should advance a loan of three lacs of pagodas to assist in the campaign. He offered to do this upon certain terms—all of which were immediately agreed to—and solemnly promised to bring forward the money. So firmly did the Governor-General repose in his good faith, that

¹ Papers relating to the Carnatic, 1803.

² Wilson: Notes to Mill, vi., 262.

he allowed the military chest to be emptied, relying on the loan to replenish it. The Nawab, however, failed in his engagement, and, had not treasure arrived from Bengal at the critical moment, it is not easy to calculate the disasters which might have ensued. Systematic treachery is the only cause we can assign for this conduct.¹

¹ Malcolm : Political History, 335

CHAPTER XLIII.

ACQUISITION OF THE CARNATIC.

AT this period, a correspondence was discovered at Seringapatam, which positively convicted Mohammed Ali, who owed all to the English, of playing falsely with them. He and his son, Omdut-ul-Omrah, the reigning Nawab, had carried on a treacherous intrigue with Tippoo Sultan.¹ If a formidable conspiracy was not revealed, still a state of feeling and a course of conduct became evident, totally irreconcileable with the character of a faithful dependent.² Nothing could be more clear. In violation of an express article in the treaty of 1792, the late Nawab and his successor, had maintained a

¹ Thornton : History of India.

² Wilson : Notes to Mill, vi., 324.

secret intercourse with the King of Mysore, directed towards objects hostile to the Company, and subversive of the first principles of the alliance they had formed with it. They had made representations to an enemy, favourable to him and injurious to us. They had condemned the triple alliance against Tippoo, and stigmatized the Nizam as a traitor to his faith, for not rallying an army under the standards of Seringapatam. They had employed a private cipher in their treasonous correspondence, and evinced their spirit by the contemptuous terms applied to the Company and its allies. The son, on the father's death, pursued conduct exactly similar to this, in violation of the treaty which he declared himself resolved to observe, and especially of article the tenth, which stipulated—

“That the Nawab shall not enter into any negotiations, or political correspondence, with any European or native power whatever, without the consent of the Company.”

This was the most essential point in the contract, since it alone secured the peace of India. As, therefore, it is established by the common law of nations, that the violation of any single

article in a treaty—more especially a principal one—overthrows the whole, the convention of 1792 was, of course, entirely dissolved. Henceforward the Nawab could invoke against the English the spirit of no mutual charter; for he had himself trampled on the chief stipulation of the bond by which he had been related to them.¹

He had betrayed the confidence of the British Government; he had maintained spies in their territory ; he had plotted with the Mysore King for their extirpation from India. He had since continued to exhibit at once his imbecility and his want of faith. This was proved by a cool and laborious inquiry.² Had Mohammed Ali's conduct been discovered while he was alive, it would have justified his overthrow; Omdut-ul-Omrah had, by acts precisely similar, as well as by other systematic violations of the treaty, released them from every scruple. The dominions he held by their sufferance he had proved himself unable to govern. All doubt vanished before the light which broke from the secret recesses of Seringapatam. The Government, therefore, adopted the resolve of forcing him to fulfil his duty, or depriving him of his trust. They had

¹ Malcolm : Political History, 339.

² Penhoon : Empire Anglais, iv., 426.

made sacrifices for his sake; they had permitted him to destroy the resources on which their safety, as well as his own, depended; and now, when every reason for delay was exhausted, they respected his weakness, and allowed him new opportunities for conciliation.

Meanwhile, however, the prince was attacked by a mortal disease, and perished amid the decaying fragments of a kingdom corrupted by mal-administration. With the executors of his will and nominated advisers of his successor, long consultations were held. They confessed the throne of the Carnatic to be entirely dependent on the English, and avowed the most sincere respect for them. It was announced, without reserve, that the only ground on which the candidate's instalment could be recognised, was the entire transfer of the civil and military government of the Carnatic to the Company. Hassein Ali, the first claimant, when the proofs of his father's bad faith were laid before him, allowed that they were true, and was persuaded to accept the arrangement, but afterwards withdrew his consent, in spite of full warnings of the consequences.¹

¹ Thornton : History of India.

Though the English had now succeeded to the power of the Mogul, and the Prince of the Carnatic stood to Calcutta as he had formerly stood to Delhi—an inferior power depending on a superior¹—this was not the only ground to justify their policy. By simply withdrawing their support from the Nawab, his fall would have been rendered inevitable; but the country would have been a battle-field to rival pretenders, and given over to all the horrors of Indian war—murders, confusion, rapine—such as followed on the death of Ranjit Singh in the Punjab. Humanity forbade that course. Had legitimacy been in question, there was no heir to the throne. Omdut-ul-Omrah had, by treachery, forfeited his crown, which he could not, therefore, leave to his son. All along, also, this young man was described as the reputed son of the Nawab, and it was discovered that he was by a woman of low origin, which, as some interpret the Muslim law, would have incapacitated him from succeeding. Of this circumstance, however, I am not inclined to take advantage. Had it stood alone, it would have been a doubtful justification; but disregarding it altogether, the situation of the

¹ Wilson: Notes to Mill vi., 388.

Carnatic relative to British interests, remained that of absolute dependence.

When, consequently, Hassein Ali refused the terms upon which the British offered to intrust him with the office of Nawab, they resolved on tendering it to Azim-ul-Dowlah, another grandson of Mohammed Ali, of legitimate extraction. The only objection to his claim was the will of the late governor, who, before he made that will, had himself forfeited his position, and never had the right to nominate a successor. Azim at once acknowledged, what it would have been useless for him to dispute, the justice of the Company's views, his predecessor's treachery, and his own obligations.¹ He was installed with solemn pomp; and thus was a noble achievement performed for India—an achievement justly declared by its author to be one of the most useful and salutary since the acquisition of Bengal.²

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais, iv., 426.

² Wellesley : Letter to H. Addington.

CHAPTER XLIV.

ANNEXATION OF THE CARNATIC.

THE annexation of the Carnatic was a perfect revolution. It was a revolution in the elements, in the principles, in the members, in the organs of government. A new political, a new moral, a new social scheme was introduced. On all sides benefits were distributed. The native prince was saved from the tyranny of reckless adventurers swarming in his Court—from growing debts—from eternal complications, daily more confused—from the power of committing great crimes, and the danger of meeting their punishment. His people were rescued from an oppression which made a desert where the art of industrious ages had made a paradise, spoiled them of all the grateful fruits of peace, and left

them to lament in misery, or endure in reptile torpor, the afflictions of servitude. The English were relieved from a heavy burden—from the perennial source of trouble—from dissensions without hope of settlement. The mind of Wellesley displayed itself on this occasion, lofty, pure, and luminous. The Carnatic is a monument to his fame.

It suited the purpose of a late writer, many of whose views are admirable,¹ to declare that the scenes of ravage which have desolated India, and drenched her plains with blood, have been equally terrible, whether the tide of conquest poured from the plains of Tartary, or from the Crescent and the Green Flag, or from the ranges of the west, or from the plateau above the Deccan, or from the decks of British transports. The Company may well afford to be condemned by such a judge. Even from their bitter and laborious prosecutor, this acknowledgment is won, that, if the Governor-General held in view the true end for which government was instituted, and for which it ought to be upheld, he could stand with perfect assurance upon his policy.² Its fruits were rich and precious. A

¹ Campbell : British India.

² Mill : British India, vi., 320.

wide and beautiful country was incorporated in the immense mass of the British Empire. Eighteen hundred years before, it had contributed a province to a Hindu monarchy; it had passed under the Muslim yoke, and few countries were so abundantly adorned with the monuments of piety, pride, or wealth; with temples dedicated to a solemn faith; with tombs erected by vanity as the receptacles of mortal dust; with palaces which no sovereign ought ever to have been rich enough to possess, and no people servile enough to build.¹ Few also had exhibited more sad vicissitudes of fortune. It had been devastated by frequent wars; it had been swept by the fleet and fierce cavalry of the Mahrattas, of Hyder, and of Tippoo; its people had been slaughtered time after time by the light of their own blazing homes; it had been afflicted by chronic famine, with pestilence—its auxiliary genius—and now it was blessed by a happy revolution.

The evils of a divided government were then removed from the Carnatic.² The Balaghaut ceded districts of Bellary and Cuddalpur, wrested from Tippoo Sultan, were included in this peace-

¹ Hamilton: Hindustan, i., 401.

² Auber: British Power in India, ii., 210.

ful conquest. They were situated in that broad table land, supported by the Ghauts, and extending from the Khrisna to the frontiers of Mysore, and occupied a surface more capacious than that of Scotland. A soil of peculiar wealth would have nourished a happy population, had not the curse of an evil government—the cruelty of despotism without its strength—imposed continual suffering upon them. In 1800, when the provinces came under our sway, they were in a state of social chaos. The revenue officers plundered the population; the chiefs maintained a predatory warfare among themselves; and every man pillaged every other who was weaker than himself. All the villages were garrisons; and battles raged without ceasing. Few families of consequence had escaped a murder, or neglected to commit one. This was the condition of things when the Company's authority was established. In the course of a few years the population increased largely, and tranquillity was re-established.¹ Any recent traveller in the south of India is able to describe the contrast now offered by the Balaghaut ceded districts, with their aspect under the former system of rule.

¹ amilton : Hindustan, ii., 329.

Humanity would rejoice, it is allowed by a cynical historian, if every inch of India were in the same manner brought under the Company's sway. The same severe judge acknowledges that this association has in India, with a sincere and liberal benevolence, laboured more for the welfare of its Asiatic subjects than all the other sovereigns taken together on the surface of the globe.¹ There may not be, indeed, very much implied in its favour by this confession, but according to the usual view of history it possesses a broad meaning. Be this as it may, the reader can judge whether the assumption of the Carnatic was a revolting or a righteous transaction—whether it was a conquest, just, because preceded by honourable dealings; secure, because followed by wise plans of government; useful, because advantageous to the people. Philosophers might divide the achievements of power into two classes—those which Providence has ordered to scourge, and those which it has permitted to bless, mankind. If they be great and good who succeed in making other men so, then the English in southern India have acquired those titles; for the dignity of the native race has increased,

¹ Mill : British India, vi., 331.

since they exchanged an Asiatic for a European master. However, we leave these reflections for others to pursue. Meanwhile, let us descend to an episode of acquisition which may be still more simply and more easily explained.¹

¹ See Hon. Charles Greville's ii. 521, for an estimate of Hyder's devastation. He reckons at five hundred and forty thousand souls the number who perished within two years, in consequence of his ferocity. The most extravagant accounts only compute at two hundred thousand the victims of Kouli Khan's unsparing sword. Fraser, Hist. Nadir Shah, 222.

CHAPTER XLV.

ACQUISITION OF TANJORE.

SEVERAL years before the arrival of Lord Wellesley in India, the Rajah of Tanjore, having no surviving children, provided an heir by adopting a son, whom he confided to the care of his brother, Amar Singh. That personage, at the prince's death, denied the boy's claim. Both appealed to the English, but ultimately referred the question to a council of pundits, or exponents of law. They decided in favour of the man against the child—the strong against the weak.¹ The English, deceived by this representation,² and having no interest in the transaction, refrained from interference; but requested

¹ Thornton : History of India.

² Wilson : Notes to Mill, vi., 308.

that the excluded infant should be fairly provided for. Every promise was made, but none was ever fulfilled ; the child was even cruelly treated. New representations were made to the Rajah, but answered with insolence. He was once more called on, in peremptory terms, to fulfil his engagements, and as the youthful prince was in actual peril, a company of Sepahis was ordered to wait on him as a private guard. The harshness of Amar Singh was inveterate, and rose to positive cruelty and persecution.¹ The boy took refuge at Madras, and the English, as the imperial nation, had once more to arbitrate between him and his old oppressor.²

It was asserted, and upon strong presumptive evidence, that the native lawyers who decided in favour of Amar Singh had been bribed. Whether they had been bribed or not, there was every reason to believe that their sentence was unjust. The British at length interfered, and opened a formal inquiry. The child was distinctly named in the late Rajah's will successor to the tributary throne of Tanjore. If that prince had a right to name his heir, the point was settled as far as his authority went ; if not,

¹ Pearson : Life of Schwartz, ii., 268.

² Mill : British India, vi., 307.

it was an open cause, in which the Company was the only tribunal to which any appeal could be made. Three objections were made to Serfojee, the youth, by his enemy, Amar Singh. First, that the Rajah, when he made his last testament, was imbecile ; second, that the boy was an only son ; third, that he was too old at the time to be legally adopted. The clearest and most ample evidence disproved the first statement. On the others, which were simply questions of law, numerous Brahmins—hereditary expounders of the Indian code—were consulted. Not only the most learned professors of the faith of southern India, but the great sacerdotal nobles of Bengal, and the chief lights of Benares—the depository of ancient lore—were summoned to judge between the child and the man.

They were men regarded among the Hindus as grave and awful authorities. The refusal of their judgment on a point of Brahminical law, would have been an insult to the proudest caste of Asia, whom it has been the wisdom of the Company to conciliate, not to coerce. They all decided in the young prince's favour. Proof was carried beyond the reach of doubt, that the old conclave was either corrupt or ignorant, like the renowned Council of Salamanca. This decision

could not be imputed to the partiality of the English. They had throughout leaned strongly to the cause of Amar Singh.¹ His claims, however, by this, as well as by his illegitimate birth, were altogether vitiated.²

This inquiry was terminated when Lord Wellesley arrived in India. He resolved to restore without delay the lawful candidate; but looking upon Tanjore with a penetrating, aquiline eye—to borrow an orator's phrase—³ he saw to what state that country had, by a long succession of misfortunes, been reduced. It was confessedly dependent on the Company; for to that power its rival chiefs had turned as to the judgment of a master. The revenue was far in arrears; an army of adventurers continually pillaged the inhabitants; flourishing towns had fallen to ruin; the tillers of the soil were consumed by poverty; industry was paralysed by the influence of oppression; and gradually the land was relapsing into the original wilderness. Anarchy had reached that point when blood flowed over the whole province. The magnitude of these evils was so overwhelming, that the new prince could

¹ Thornton : British India.

² Wilson : Notes to Mill, vi, 308.

³ Burke : Speech on America.

not cope with them, and resigned the cares, to enjoy the pageantry and luxury, of his position. This was done at the request of the English;¹ for the Rajah, as their subsidiary, was dependent on them. From misery and humiliation the young prince was elevated to the enjoyment of a splendid revenue, of royal pomp, and of some authority. The pile of star pagodas which annually glittered at his feet, to be lavished in peace on the Sybaritic enjoyments of Oriental life, far exceeded in substantial value the privileges he had lost. Under no circumstances could he have been independent. He could not stand alone; and while he remained governor, the people would have suffered all the evils of despotism. They now, for the first time, stood face to face with justice. A soldiery was raised to protect, and not to plunder them. The English, by this act, increased their power without compromising their fame. Three courses had been open to them. They might have acknowledged a usurper, and allowed the country to rot under his oppression. They might have restored the lawful claimant, and upheld him in the Musnud, while the people sank and perished amid

¹ Penhoen : Empire Anglais.

anarchy, bloodshed, and famine. Or they might have secured to this prince more than he could have enjoyed, if left with the name of independence, and performed towards the inhabitants of Tanjore that duty which is owed by power to all who fall within its range. They, of course, gained commercially and politically by this transaction; but it is safe to affirm that the inhabitants of Tanjore gained to a far greater extent. This agreement was concluded on the last day of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER XLVI.

ACQUISITION OF SURAT.

THE extension of our territorial dominion was now wide and rapid. Event after event rose over the horizon of India to impel the Company forward. The whole political system of that region had undergone a change. They had acquired the capital of the Indian religion ; they were now about to acquire the capital of Indian commerce.¹ The transaction, which ended in the annexation of Surat, is one of the simplest episodes in our career, though needing explanation ; as it has not escaped the censure of the industrious historian, who blames nearly all the acts of the English, while his love of truth

¹ Thornton : History of India.

extorts from him a superb eulogium on their general conduct as governors of Hindustan.¹

Surat was one of the principal cities on the shores of the peninsula. It was, perhaps, the largest in India, though the least elegant. Seven miles in circumference, its walls enclosed no stately edifices, no graceful minarets, no towering pagodas, no spacious caravanserais; but instead of these, lofty, crowded, and meanly-built houses, with the celebrated asylum for sick or injured animals and vermin, where multitudes of living creatures, from a horse to a flea, luxuriated on public charity. Yet a flourishing intercourse was carried on with various parts of the world. Ships laden under the rock of Cintra—in the harbour of Long Island—at the mouth of the Hooghly—at the ports of the Red Sea—at the cities of the Persian Gulf—in the Straits of Malacca—in the waters of the Channel—at Mozambique, and the Isle of France, poured their freights on the shores of India, near the town of Surat. Thither came traders from the valley of Kashmere, from the borders of the Indus, and from all parts of the East, to traffic in pearls, diamonds, ambergris, civet, musk,

¹ Mill : British India, vi., 330.

gold, silk, spices, fragrant woods, indigo, salt-petre, and other precious commodities.¹ It was consequently an important emporium of commerce. The Muslims knew it as one of the gates through which the pilgrims of the East took their passage by sea to the sacred shrine of Mecca. The tribes of Omar, believers in the inspired and holy books of Zend, fled to this hospitable city—the Liverpool of India—when the fanatics of their own land expelled them, by successful persecution, from their native soil. While the flames of religious conflict were thus raging in their original country, the fugitives applied themselves to the arts of peace, and Surat was endowed with new wealth by their industry.²

The English had early been engaged in trade at this famous mart. They possessed a factory there; their dealings enriched the city; and about the middle of the seventeenth century their swords defended it from the Mahrattas, whose victories then pervaded India with a universal fear. They were warmly thanked; and when nearly a hundred years had passed, their valour was remembered with gratitude and

¹ Hamilton : Hindustan, ii., 720.

² Heeren : European States and Colonies, ii., 216.

admiration. They were solicited to take possession of the castle and the fleet,¹ originally established by the Mogul for the maritime protection of India on the western side;² but as the Mahrattas had established themselves in the province, and levied tribute on the city, they hesitated, doubting their right, until they were actually attacked, and all redress refused. They then, by the aid of the reigning Nawab, assumed the government of the castle and the fleet, which had long been pressed upon them.³

The government of Delhi was still alive, and shining, though with faded splendour, from the imperial city in Upper India. The Mogul formally confirmed the English in their new authority; for all who had ever exercised sway at Surat—except the Mahrattas, who were simple invaders—had held it by virtue of his firman. His flag still waved over the fleet and castle. This acquisition was made in accordance with the will of the people, of the governor, and of the Supreme Sovereign; so that not the most jealous can throw a shadow of blame on the original establishment of the English authority.

¹ Thornton : History of India.

² Mill : British India, vi., 289.

³ Auber : British Power in India, ii., 207.

at Surat. This is to be remembered while the subsequent proceedings are examined.

The Nawab, holding under the Mogul by a feudal tenure, acknowledged the superior right of the Company, by vesting in them the power to appoint a deputy-governor. When the Mogul Empire dissolved, and all its splendid pageantry; its magnificence, enhanced by fancy; its fabled opulence; its faded trappings of gold and purple, passed away like an aërial vision—the creation of enchantment—it left revealed to view only the plain outline and solid fabric of British authority. There was no Indian heir to that noble dominion. All but the fierce invaders from the western mountains had seen their kingdoms shrink, perish, or disappear. And these states, which rose about the falling Empire of Delhi as clouds about the setting sun, deriving their light and glory from its expiring splendour, could only stand lords of the ascendant on the ruins of British supremacy. Asia, which gave people, arts, and institutions to Europe, received governors, manners, and laws from the nation it had despised as a family of homeless buccaneers. The course of revolution still rolled on. Hindu had been succeeded by Muslim, and Muslim was now yielding to Christian. The sacred star of

yellow dust—symbol of the Brahminical faith—had ceased to shine on the foreheads of the rulers of India; the horns of the Crescent were waning with paler light, and the Cross was beginning to glimmer in the face of the sun.

The Nawab of the great commercial city of Surat, therefore, found himself amid the crowd of kings and princes, laying tribute at the feet of the Company. He had always held from the Mogul: he now held from the Mogul's successors. He could not, indeed, hope to support himself without leaning on them. While, however, this divided authority was not confused, the English allowed him an equal share of the executive power, and granted him many favours; but when he was required to furnish his equal share towards the defence of the city, he refused. He was requested, also, to reform his administration, which involved the character of the English, who saw the city, nominally under their protection, devoured by civil wrongs.¹ By assuming authority, they had undertaken to secure the interests of the people, but their beneficent policy was neutralised by the perverseness of their native subordinate.² Arrangements were pressed

¹ Mill—Auber—Wilson's Notes—Penhoen—Thornton.

² Auber: British Power in India, ii., 207.

upon him, and he was reluctantly proceeding to conclude a compact, when death cut short his operations.

He left an infant son, who died also, when an uncle presented himself as candidate for the office. He had not a shadow of claim, but the place was offered him, on the condition of his effecting some necessary reforms in the civil administration, and sharing the essential duties of government. He refused, and might at once have been set aside by the right which the maladministration of a subordinate functionary confers.¹ Nevertheless, the English elevated him to that rank which was the height of his aspiration, made a rich provision for his family, and took the whole government on themselves. Never was amelioration more needed. The only circumstance to regret in this and in many other episodes of our progress, is the long delay which intervened between the justification of conquest and the conquest itself; for conquest it was, though not at the point of the sword. Perhaps, however, the character for forbearance and liberality thus acquired throughout the East may be accepted as one mitigation of the evil.²

¹ Wilson: Notes to Mill, vi., 297.

² Thornton: History of India.



CHAPTER XLVII.

BRITISH INDIA IN 1793.

HERE, on the brink of a war with France, and while a cloud of events was darkening the face of peace on the plains of India, we may glance at the actual position occupied by the English in continental Asia.

The rich provinces of Bahar, Bengal, and Orissa—each in its time a kingdom—were possessed in full sovereignty. The district and the crescent-shaped city of Benares, with a broad tract to the west of the Ganges, acquired from Oude, belonged to the Company also, and their rule was consequently extended from the sea coast to Delhi—more than a thousand miles. The Nawab's dominions were enclosed by the English territories, where they remain to this

day, a desert in the midst of plenty, a decaying barbarism amid the first fruits of a youthful civilization. The Northern Circars on the Coromandel coast, the ancient Jaghire round Fort St. George, the broad plains of the Carnatic, the districts in the Tanjore and Tinnivelly country, stretching in a continuous chain through the peninsula to Malabar, were joined by the tributary state of the Hindu province on the plateau of Mysore. Bombay and Salsette on the upper coast, with the cessions from Broach, completed the extent of their dominion.

Their rivals—and, therefore, enemies—were the Rajah of Berar, whose kingdom extended from the western shores of the Bay of Bengal to the frontiers of the Nizam and the Mahrattas. Ava and Nepaul were too inconsiderable, or too little known to be feared. The Peishwa, however, with his powerful feudatories, Holkar and Sindiah, seated in Delhi, with the slave Mogul in his hands, threatened them with danger. It was not long before the emulation of these rival empires, that could not flourish together, carried them to a field of battle, which required all the valour and wisdom of the English to win.¹

¹ Auber: British Power in India, ii., 271.

We proceed to that great episode, and commence, with all assurance, upon the ground that the English had righteously acquired their cessions from Oude, the Carnatic, Tanjore, and the commercial emporium of Surat. And here it is necessary to observe, that though this inquiry extends only to the causes of conquest, the English were engaged, without ceasing, in plans of improved administration. Large reforms were projected, and large reforms were needed. Parliament, and the Directors at home, with the Governor-General and the Council in India, had perpetually in consideration the civil, military, and fiscal administration of our Eastern Empire. For this much gratitude is due, not only to the friends, but to the enemies, of the Company. It was Sheridan who made Indian affairs a graceful topic; it was Fox who forced them on the attention of the Commons; it was Burke who illuminated the public mind upon them; and Pitt was driven to sail down the channel they had opened up. We may believe those illustrious orators to have levelled an unjust assault upon the Company; but we must be grateful to them, because they awakened the nation to watch over the people of its new Oriental dominions. This division of the history

is by no means the least interesting, but it is apart from my object, though it may be necessary to recall the reader's attention to the fact, that he may not proceed with the idea that the sword alone was the instrument in the hands of his countrymen, while they laid open the rich provinces of India for a reign of peace, for the increase of commerce, and for the advance of civilization.

That period is referred to as the Company's golden age, the high tide of its financial prosperity.¹ Its strength, therefore, was equal to great achievements; a surplus of treasure accumulating in years of peace, furnished resources for the fund of war, and careful administration has at all times been enabled to produce this result.² When, therefore, in 1793, a debate on the renewal of the charter agitated the public mind in England, the advocates of the Company pointed to a dazzling prospect of increasing trade, which perhaps deceived the hopes of many. The tendency in man to be charmed by illusive visions, and to fly at one bound from moderation to extravagance, acted powerfully on that occasion.

¹ Sir George Tucker : Financial Review, 29.

² Wilson : Notes to Mill, vi., 3.

The nation promised itself that the capital of the East India merchants flowing to India would come back with a marvellous reflux of increase to fructify upon our shores; and when these fancies were not perfectly realized, disappointment followed, the Company was denounced, and popular writers who had been reckless of their praise, ran riot in unlimited censure.

It is just, however, to the public mind of that period to remember, that it was not alone engaged in inquiries into the commercial advantages to be derived from continuing the Company's charter; to eradicate corruption from the civil and political administration of British India was a capital object of policy. New regulations for the distribution of patronage were therefore framed. The Government was accused of pillaging the natives by a false system of fiscal economy. To cure this evil it was proposed to fix the land tax, and to check aggressions upon native powers, the Governor-General should be made responsible to Parliament. To these changes the assent was ready and sincere. Indeed, manifold and various as are the offences charged against the great corporation which has, during so many years, administered the concerns

of our vast territories in the East, it is allowed, where little partiality can be suspected, that in regard to *intention*, no government of past or present times stands equally high with that of the East India Company.¹

While British India was dividing, with the most portentous questions of domestic economy, the solicitude of the British people; while statesmen here were invoking God to look down upon the crimes committed by civilization against an oppressed and dependent race, other parts of Asia, and of the world, exhibited a strange contrast with that. In all the contiguous countries of India, despotism was consuming the people, who fled, when they could, in crowds to enjoy, under our flag, that peace and security which hitherto had been no more among them than a tradition of times past. Eastward from Bengal to the borders of China, grovelled a succession of races, who had made no advance during hundreds of years, and have to this day remained in uncultivated masses, rotting away, more useless than the woods which encumber their country; for these in their decay enrich and renovate the

¹ Mill : British India, vi., 19.

soil; while man, in his barbarous state, taking more from the earth than he returns, literally wastes the energies of nature. Among the Burmese, the inhabitants of Siam, the Hindu-Chinese nations, and the tribes of the Malayan Peninsula, humanity was stagnant. In the Celestial Empire itself, the Brother of the Sun and Moon reigned over a huge listless population, pretending to be immutable, but in reality sinking back in manners, arts, and laws. Still further from the knowledge and sympathies of Europe wandered the vast hordes of central Asia—the Black Tartars, the chivalrous and hospitable nomades of the Kirghiz race—preserving the simplicity of pastoral life, and happier, perhaps, than any polished race on the globe, but remote from improving influences, and undistinguished by the gentler and more graceful amenities of civilization. Still, as they were not fixed to the soil, or subjected to an inflexible yoke, they might compare advantageously with the Hindus, for the painless and unrepenting enjoyment of life.

Throughout the Indian Archipelago, the Dutch possessions strongly contrasted with the British establishments in the East. While in

India religious and royal capitals decayed and commercial cities flourished, with villages, hamlets, and the dwellings of a scattered population; in Java the old towns, once famous emporiums of trade, fell into neglect, the jungle successfully maintained a contest with the drill and the plough, and the condition of the people deteriorated. In the Spice Islands, the original race perished as under a pestilential influence, and among the other groups of that beautiful insular region was going on the work of demoralization and decay, while piracy flourished on the plunder of a struggling trade. In Eastern Turkey a similar process enervated the people, brutalised the government, and wasted the riches of the earth. Thus, in all Asia, the only territories which were not rapidly travelling towards the aphelion of their prosperity, the only territories where any salutary changes afforded a promise for the future, were those occupied by the English race; and though many vices of administration still continued to afflict the people, steady and sincere endeavours were made to reform these evils, and a provident liberality laid up great stores of happiness for the future.

The colonial possessions of Great Britain, and

of other powers, in other parts of the world, afforded no advantageous comparison with the territories of India. In America the new Republic, in the second youth of the British people, was already fermenting with enterprise. In the West Indies, colonies founded on a crime against human nature experienced all of them vicissitudes, and many of them frightful catastrophes; while in the French settlements, the *Amis des Noirs*, by an injudicious and hasty attempt to atone for the offences of centuries, kindled a bloody, servile war.¹ In Spanish America, though illustrious travellers described a state of tranquil happiness, it was that contented apathy which is the precursor, not of renovation, but of decay.² The Dutch East India Company, expiring from pure exhaustion of its vital powers, left an administration which, though rapacious, could scarcely ever support itself, and though vigilant in its selfishness, was eaten up by contraband trade, and exposed to the censure and ridicule even of its own officials.³

¹ Lacroix—Sell—De Hune, and Ramsay.

² See Humboldt, De Pons, Azara, Fischer, Skinner, and Silvera, for notices of those regions at that period.

³ See the *Bericht Rahende*, p. 6381, in which the decay is confessed, and Hogendorp's account of the Company's affairs.

Great Britain in Australia, in the Pacific, and in other regions, was advancing her colonial power and her maritime enterprise, but nowhere was such a grand theatre opened up as that which was lost in America, and was now regained in India.

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